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by James McAfee
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Greg Stevens

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"PWI 500" ON SALE OCTOBER 3, 2000

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FROM THE DESK OF...

IS IT TRUE that everything Vince McMidas touches turns to gold?

The numbers certainly don't lie. The WWF made $85.7-million in net profits during its last fiscal year, and that was, of course, before its lucrative contract with Viacom kicked in. WWFE stock is on the rise and considered a "strong buy" by most analysts. The WWF's New York City eatery has lines out the door at lunch time, its Web site rakes in big bucks, its licensing deals are extremely lucrative, and, yes, its magazines are pretty good, too.

VINCE McMAHON IS A GENIUS.

I've been hearing that for about 17 years now, but I'm not convinced. Da Vinci, Einstein, Salk ... McMahon? Vince is good, incredibly good. Call him smart, call him a visionary, because he's both, but a genius? Vince McMahon has done things in the wrestling business that no one else can even copy successfully, but is he a genius? Truth is, while Vince has broadened the scope of professional wrestling exponentially and made it into a billion-dollar industry, he has never enjoyed any real success in any other entertainment arena.

Back in 1992, Vince created the World Bodybuilding Federation, taking aim at multi-billionaire promoter and publisher Joe Weider. Waging a campaign reminiscent of his wrestling raids almost a decade earlier, McMahon grabbed talent from the Weider camp and began changing bodybuilding from a serious sport to sports entertainment. McMahon was hailed "a genius," but when the losses began to mount, he had no choice but to terminate the project. McMahon's WBF losses came right out of Titan Sports' wallet. He is too smart to risk his own money on the XFL. Having taken the company public, Vince can now essentially risk his investors' money. One of those investors is NBC, a 50-50 partner in the XFL. NBC, recall, originally was to have started a new league in partnership with Turner Sports after the two were jilted by the NFL a couple of years back. (McMahon once again makes happen what Turner couldn't.)

While the XFL is not set up to go head-to-head with the NFL on the calendar, don't be misled into thinking that there is no heat between the two. In announcing the formation of the league, McMahon pointed out the NFL's diminishing ratings, its failure to entice the 17- to 34-year-old demographic, and its increasingly fan unfriendly rules. The NFL, though reluctant to address the issue of the XFL publicly, has in the past made it quite clear that there is no room for a second football league. It will quietly do everything within its power to minimize the XFL's impact. (Amazing how fast the NFL came up with the experimental concept of officials wearing cameras after the XFL announced it would be using helmet cams!)

Can the XFL make it? Truthfully, I don't think so. Aside from the obvious reasons (lack of talent, tradition, and fan base), there are two strong negatives that stand out in my mind: One, a lot of football's appeal is based on gambling. In spite of the XFL's claim that it will be legitimate sport, how many people would be willing to put their money up in games in which Vince McMahon is involved? The other major problem is the XFL is a product designed almost exclusively for television. Fans might get into the unique production values offered by the WWF, but how will that translate to fans sitting in Chicago's Soldier Field on Saturday nights in February, where the wind chill factor is often way below zero? Without the excitement created by the live crowd, how exciting will the product seem to the fans watching at home? (Flip back and forth between *Raw* and *Nitro* on any given Monday and you'll know exactly what I'm talking about.)

My respect for Vince McMahon has increased over the years. He reinvented wrestling and continually reinvents his own company. He's a man who will listen to advice from those he trusts and learn from his mistakes. He has more common sense than just about anyone I know. For 17 years I've resisted following the pack and calling him a genius. I guess if he can make the XFL work, I'd have to reconsider.

Stu Saks
Publisher

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EDITOR'S NOTE: When looking for this special collector's edition on the newsstands, look for magazine title "*PWI* 500" displayed prominently on top. And also pay close attention to future announcements regarding the page count and format of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated.* We think you'll like what you hear!

between falls

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Letters preceded by a ☎ indicate letters left by fans on the *PWI* Hotline (1-900-884-4PWI; see ad elsewhere in this issue).

THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY

Scott Steiner was featured on the cover of the October 2000 issue of *PWI*. The accompanying story, however, had very little to do with "Big Poppa Pump's" WCW career. It focused on just how big a star he might be today if Vince McMahon hadn't let him get away. We received a lot of interesting reader reaction to this story.

"I think it's wrong to assume Steiner would be a huge star in the WWF today," wrote Sam Rinaldi of Ozone Park, New York. "McMahon seems to be emphasizing younger stars. He might not even want someone as injury-prone as Steiner."

"I'd love to see 'Big Poppa Pump' in the WWF right now," wrote Steve Traynor of Seattle. "He'd be able to speak his mind a lot more there, and can you imagine what battles between him and 'Stone-Cold' would be like?"

"Interesting story, but I'm really glad Vince let Steiner get away," e-mailed Todd Harmon of Columbus, Ohio. "I think 'Big Poppa Pump' will do a lot to make WCW strong again."

ADDITION BY SUBTRACTION

When I heard the news about Vince Russo leaving the WWF for WCW, I thought the WWF was doomed. Little did I know how wrong I was! In my opinion, the WWF is actually better without Vince Russo.

Look at what the WWF has accomplished since he left. They've acquired Tazz, The Dudley Boyz, Perry Saturn, Chris Benoit, Eddie Guerrero, and Dean Malenko.

The WWF has taken two wrestlers no one really cared about—Brian Christopher (Grandmaster Sexay) and Scott Taylor (Scotty Too Hotty)—and turned them into two of the most popular wrestlers in the world. They also turned someone with an unusually large ass into a huge fan favorite. Of course, I also have to mention that they took Kurt Angle—a real Olympic wrestler—and turned him into a great bad guy who possesses good wrestling and microphone skills.

The feuds, such as the McMahon-Helmsley Faction vs. The Rock, Kane, and Undertaker, are very entertaining, and I love the new biker thing for The Undertaker. The evil gimmick was getting old. I bet Russo couldn't have changed 'Taker's gimmick.

Whoever is booking up there in the WWF, keep up the good work. The WWF is as strong as I have seen it in years.

MIKE IANNONE
Bothell, WA

SUPER GR-8 FAN

Today I read your story on the Super 8 tournament ("Super 8 2000: A Clean Sweep For Chris Daniels!" August 2000) and I thought it was excellent.

As one of the few people who appreciates entertainment and great wrestling, I hope your magazine will have more stories like this in the future. I am a wrestling purist who enjoys both aspects of professional wrestling.

Stories like these will keep me as a fan of your magazines for years to come. For all of this, I thank you.

CHRISTOPHER GIBBS
feelinstupid@hotmail.com

ALIVE AGAIN

After reading "Stark Raven Mad! What About Me ... What About Francine?" (September 2000), I had to agree with Harry Burkett. Francine was wasting her time with a loser like Raven.

Although she may have hated being Tommy Dreamer's "trophy," Francine was allowed to be herself: dynamic, exciting, and sexy. With Raven, she was a brooding shell of her former self. I'm very happy that Francine has aligned herself with Justin Credible. Now she can do what she's done for so many years in ECW, and that is spark the crowd. You

There she is, "The Queen Of Extreme," Francine. Reader Patty Friel is glad that Francine left Raven and joined Justin Credible in ECW.

may not like the things she does as Credible's manager, but at least Francine is alive again.

PATTY FRIEL
Boston, MA

☎ DON'T WORRY

I see all these people getting mad because Goldberg turned and went over to Bischoff and Russo's side at The Great American Bash, but I don't see what the big deal is. Do you really think he'll be with them that long? He'll get sick of being around those jerks in a few months.

JUDD VAN HORNE
Piscataway, NJ

GOOD OL' DAYS

Finally, someone who echoes my exact sentiments regarding the current state wrestling as compared to the good ol' days of the great sport.

Frank Krewda was absolutely right with his "Krew-Cuts" column (August 2000), as he touched on many points that have been on my mind for a while.

Definitely, many promoters and wrestlers have gone out of their way to degrade and mock what was once a respectable profession. This "sports entertainment" crap is often unwatchable.

I, too, would enjoy seeing world titles or other major championships defended less often and treated with more respect, heavy interference minimized, a little more order emphasized by referees and officials, and also a clearer, better-defined distinction drawn between fan favorites and rulebreakers.

Since when, and especially why, have so many fans started to approve of conventionally unpopular traits in wrestling such as arrogance, rebelliousness, and incessant trash-talking?

Come on, fans and wrestlers, get a grip!

CARLOS BERMUDEZ
Hialeah, FL

Opinion was mixed on Will Welsh's interview with Eric Bischoff in September 2000's "Press Conference." Reader Pat Garr loved it, but Gary Gagne thought it was a waste of space.

IM-*PRESS*-ED?

My congratulations and thanks go out to Will Welsh for his excellent interview with Eric Bischoff ("Press Conference," September 2000).

It isn't often that fans can catch a glimpse into the lives of major wrestling superstars like Bischoff, but Mr. Welsh did a wonderful job of showing us a side of Bischoff that the fans never see.

Once again, great job!

PAT GARR
Philadelphia, PA

Once again, PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED failed to deliver a worthy interview with someone whom wrestling fans would read about. *PWI* wasted pages on Eric Bischoff ("Press Conference," September 2000). He really forgets where he started in this business.

Eric Bischoff? This guy has no idea what pro wrestling is all about. He and Vince Russo do *not* want to bring WCW back to its roots, but would rather compete with Vince McMahon's circus. Verne Gagne and other officials resisted being like McMahon and the WWF, but apparently Bischoff couldn't handle the pure nature of the AWA. When I heard Bischoff was in WCW, I knew he was *only* good enough to clean bathrooms, set up the ring, and sell refreshments.

As for Vince Russo, he belongs in Hollywood, because he has no respect for professional wrestling. He'd rather turn WCW into a cheap imitation of Vince McMahon's traveling circus.

Why doesn't *PWI* interview people who are into *professional wrestling*, like Howard Brody, the president of the NWA, or other people who are interested in keeping the tradition of pro wrestling alive?

Also, could your magazine cover wrestling organizations other than WCW and the WWF? There are others out there.

Finally, why doesn't your magazine recognize the NWA's "world" status it has had since 1948?

GARY GAGNE
Whittier, NC □

10 YEARS AGO IN PWI

The cover of our December 1990 issue featured the new blood of the WWF, but based on the actions and comments of Kerry Von Erich, Sgt. Slaughter, and The Road Warriors, we weren't so sure these guys were good for the federation. We took a closer look at all four wrestlers meant to the WWF in three in-depth articles.

Elsewhere in the magazine: *PWI* bugged The Four Horsemen's dressing room ... NWA champion Sting was featured in the centerfold ... Details of Eddie Gilbert's returns to the NWA—as a rulebreaker—were offered ... Doom's journey from the NWA undercard to the World tag team title was chronicled ... Kerry Von Erich talked about his jump to the WWF in "Press Conference."

Magazine availability: Limited.

RINGSIDE

With Will Welsh

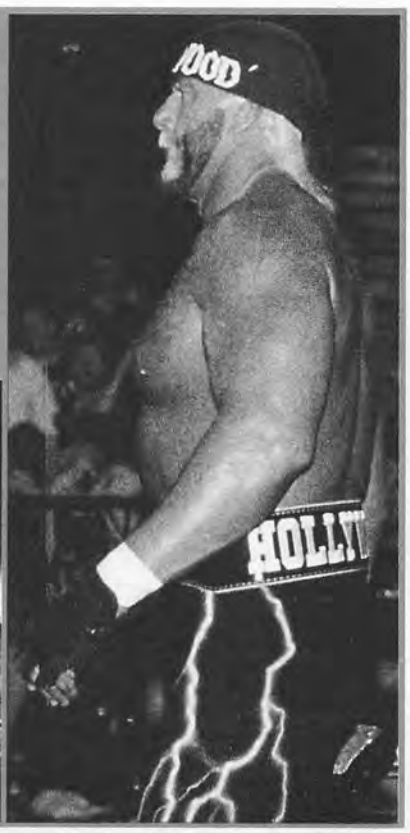
WE HAD SEEN swerves like this before. We saw one on July 7, 1996, when **Hulk Hogan** turned his back on his "Hulkamaniacs" and joined **Kevin Nash** and **Scott Hall** in the creation of the **New World Order**. We saw one on November 9, 1997, when **Vince McMahon** ordered **Earl Hebner** to ring the bell while **Shawn Michaels** held WWF World champion **Bret "The Hitman" Hart** in a sharpshooter.

So it should have come as no shock when on July 9, 2000, we saw **Vince Russo** order WCW World champion **Jeff Jarrett** to lay down for Hulk Hogan. And you know what? In and of itself, Jarrett laying down for Hogan at the Bash at the Beach pay-per-view would not have been that noteworthy. After all, it wasn't that long ago that Nash laid down for Hogan for the good of the NWO. But this was different. This was not done out of camaraderie or friendship. No, this was done out of defiance and spite. This act was done because Vince Russo had become fed up with the politics of WCW.

"All day long, I've been playing politics with Hulk Hogan, because Hulk Hogan tonight wants to play his creative control card," Russo said during a 15-minute, profanity-laced tirade. "And to Hulk Hogan, that meant that tonight in the middle of this ring, when he knew it was bulls___, he beats Jeff Jarrett!

"Well, guess what! Hulk Hogan got his wish. Hogan got his belt, and he went the hell home. And I promise everybody, or I'll go in a goddamn grave, you will not see that piece of s___ again!"

Less than an hour later, **Booker T** defeated Jeff Jarrett to win



Does anyone know the whole story of what happened at Bash at the Beach? We know Vince Russo (left) was fed up with Hulk Hogan, that Jeff Jarrett did as ordered by Russo and laid down for Hogan (below), and Hogan (right) is now livid at Russo and WCW. Is there much more to this?

his first WCW World heavyweight title. But that wasn't the story—at least not that night. For better or worse, July 9, 2000, was Vince Russo's night.

Of course, the wrestling world's immediate reaction to the events was one of shock and disbelief. Nobody, not even the most ardent Russo supporter, could believe that he actually derided Hogan in such a public forum. Yes, WCW insiders persist, Hogan had been silently trying to undermine Russo ever since Russo first entered the federation. But no one ever thought the animosity between the two would come to such a head.

So now the question is this: What happens next?

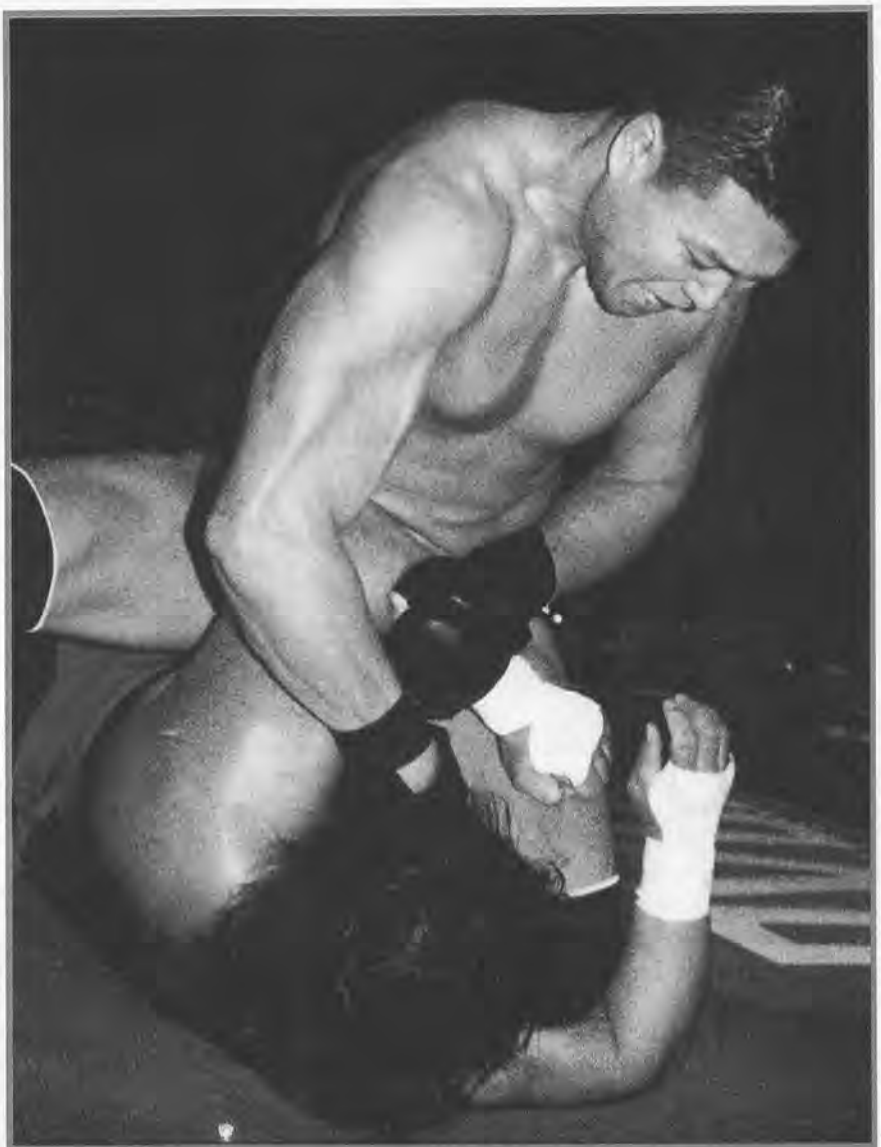
—Word is that **Eric Bischoff**, who has long been a confidant of Hogan, was not pleased with Russo's decision and stormed out of the Ocean Center shortly after Hogan pinned Jarrett.

—In a development almost as shocking as the events that transpired at the pay-per-view, WCW made no mention of what had happened between Russo, Hogan, and Jarrett on the *Nitro* following the pay-per-view. The only thing that casual observers of WCW knew was that something happened at the pay-per-view to allow Booker T a shot at Jarrett's title. If WCW wanted to capitalize on kicking Hogan to the curb, it sure had a strange way of showing it that night.

—One good aspect of the *Nitro* following Bash at the Beach, though, was the lack of 40- and 50-year-old men wearing wrestling tights while trying to pass themselves off as youthful, energetic kids.

—Hogan, in an interview with Tampa radio personality **Bubba the Love Sponge** the morning after the pay-per-view, said that he would, if he could, deliver the title belt that he "won" to Vince McMahon and the WWF.

Of course, all of this could be an elaborate scheme designed by Russo, Bischoff, and Hogan to trick the entire wrestling community. But Russo wouldn't be so stupid as to crush his roster's now-uplifted morale by bringing Hogan back in, would he?



Naoya Ogawa, peppering the head of rival Shinya Hashimoto with stiff lefts and rights, has relinquished the NWA heavyweight title. Ogawa, who is pursuing a match with Rickson Gracie, couldn't concentrate on NWA title defenses.

Another promotion in turmoil, the National Wrestling Alliance, is without a heavyweight champion for the first time in six years. **Naoya Ogawa**, who held the title since defeating **Gary Steele** on October 2, 1999, relinquished the title so he could concentrate on preparing for a match with shootfighter **Rickson Gracie**.

At press time, the NWA was planning a one-night tournament to crown a new champion.

Though USA Networks has filed an appeal, the path has been cleared for the WWF to move all of its programming to Viacom-owned network. In a decision handed down by Delaware Chancery Court Judge **William Chandler**, it was ruled that USA Networks did not meet Viacom's overall bid for WWF programming such as *Raw*, *Superstars*, and *Live Wire*.

What this means for the WWF is a strategic alliance with one of the country's dominant entertain-

(Continued on page 54)

in focus

By Dave Lenker

FEUD OF THE YEAR (2003)

I came across some excerpts of an interesting interview Bill Goldberg did with the *Knoxville News-Sentinel* recently. "Da Man" isn't too happy about everything that's going on in WCW. Among other things, he talked about how there are scantily clad women on WCW TV almost all the time now and how he wishes there were more children-friendly segments.

"Now we are no different than the other guys," he said, referring to the WWF.

Asked whether he would ever wrestle in the WWF, he responded that where as he never thought much about it in the past, now "it's the first thing I'll consider when my contract ends in three years."

Translation: If all other things are equal, why not work for the stronger of the two big companies.

Obviously, Goldberg's thinking could change a lot in the next three years, and WCW could improve a lot in three years, but WCW executives can't be too thrilled to hear their biggest star making comments like that. If Goldberg does join the WWF in three years, it'll be interesting to see how he is received by Triple-H.

A confrontation between Triple-H and Stephanie (above) and Bill Goldberg (right) at a licensing show in New York City almost got ugly; it could lead to an interesting feud three years down the road.

See, a few months ago, Triple-H made a few negative comments about Goldberg and whether the WWF would even want him if he were to become available. Goldberg didn't like this (I don't think Triple-H meant for his comments to be taken too seriously) and let Mr. Helmsley know about it when both appeared at the same licensing trade show in New York City in June. Goldberg was so angry that he dropped a few F-bombs while confronting Triple-H from about 30 feet away. Triple-H later addressed the situation on the WWF's *Byte This* Internet audio show.

"I was with Stephanie signing autographs," he said. "It was mostly just business people who are fans and people that the company does business with, so it's not your typical wrestling fan. At some point in time, Bill Goldberg decided to come over ... and say he was gonna kick my ass or whatever and just use a lot of 'F' words, and basically, to me, embarrassed himself and embarrassed World Championship Wrestling. As if they can't embarrass themselves any more.

"If Bill Goldberg has a problem with me, that's fine. I don't know why or what his problem was supposed to be ... I don't know what the reasoning was, but if it was that Bill Goldberg had a problem with me, Bill Goldberg should have addressed it with me personal-

ly, not in front of a bunch of people and not throwing profanity.

"If Goldberg would have walked up and said, 'When you're done, I'd like to talk to you,' and we would have gone and hashed out our problems, great ... but for him to stand there in front of all those people and embarrass himself and embarrass his company ... it was just bad."

Frank Krewda is still trying to convince me that Hunter took the coward's way out by claiming such behavior was unprofessional when he was the one who started this feud, if you can even call it a feud at this point. But I think by just laughing at Goldberg and not taking his taunts too seriously, Triple-H did what one of the top wrestlers in the world's top promotion should have done. Both he and the WWF had nothing to gain from making a really big deal out of the situation.

Besides, these two can make a lot of money if they wait three years to settle this in the ring.

THE KING & J.R.: PERFECT FOR XFL

A note from the June 30 "Ross Report" on wwf.com:

"J.R. and Jerry 'The King' Lawler's XFL audition held up very well to other auditions, according to WWF TV executives. My take on it is we are a long shot because we are perceived to be the rasslin' guys by network blue suits."

My take on it: Why are they long shots?

If we're going to make this league fun, why not go all the way? You can debate all you want about whether The Rock or Triple-H is the WWF's real MVP. If there were such an award, I'd have to give some consideration to Lawler. Dave Rosenbaum is right: He really can make a *Raw* broadcast seem extra special. And for Lawler to be at his best, he needs a top-notch straight man. That's where Ross comes in. (I think Lawler and Michael Cole have turned into a pretty good team for *Smackdown* as well.)

I can understand that those "network blue suits" might think that by putting two "rasslin' guys" in an XFL booth, the perception will be that the XFL is sports entertainment and not sport and thus all those pure football fans out there won't give the league a chance.

Will that really make a difference, though? Some football fans (I'm one of them) have already decided to give the XFL a chance. Most of those who won't give it a chance are either wary of the connection to Vince McMahon and professional wrestling or have no interest in watching a league whose talent isn't as good as the talent seen in the NFL.

I'm sure Dick Stockton and Matt Millen can't do much to make a lousy NFL game interesting, but I'll bet Lawler (who grew up as a big Cleveland Browns fan) and Ross (who used to call Atlanta Falcons games) could do a damn good job livening up a dull XFL affair. I can just hear them now ...

ROSS: "The guys from Memphis might be losing this one by four touchdowns, 'King,' but they have too much pride to quit. They're gonna keep playin' hard right up until that final gun sounds. That's what the XFL is all about."

LAWLER: "Pride? Who cares about pride? You know what's great about a blowout like this, J.R.?"

ROSS: "What's that, 'King'?"

LAWLER: "More time to watch the puppies!"

ROSS: "Honestly, do you ever take your eyes off the cheerleaders?"

LAWLER: "No, but I wouldn't mind taking some other things off them! You know, we got cameras in the players' locker rooms, so why not put them in the cheerleaders' dressing rooms, too?"

Of course, Lawler would not be as outrageous when calling football as he is when calling wrestling, would he? Well, if those two do end up working XFL games, you can bet that most WWF fans will tune in to find out.

(Have a comment or question about "In Focus" or anything else you see in ***PWI?*** *You can contact Dave Lenker via e-mail at pwifocus@aol.com.)* □

Jim Ross insists the chances of him and Jerry Lawler becoming a broadcast team for the XFL are not good. Dave Lenker insists it would be a mistake for the league *not* to use them.

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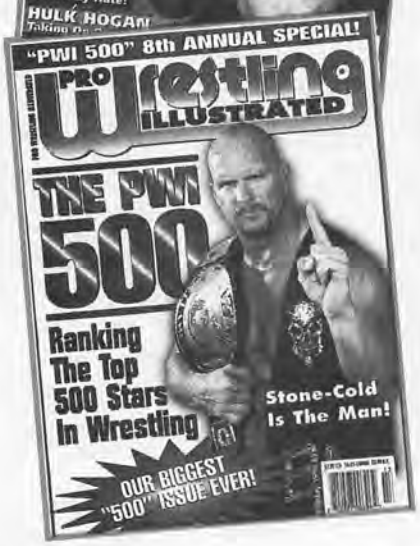
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July 1990: The Maturing Of Lex Luger: The "Total Package" Becomes The People's Choice. Centerfold: Rick Martel. Plus: Skyscrapers, Bobby Heenan, Mr. Saito, referees.

September 1990: The Hulkster's Wrath: 7,000 Miles To Violent Redemption. Centerfold: The Steiners. Plus: Jeff Jarrett, Sting, Destruction Crew, Four Horsemen, Curt Hennig.

October 1990: Sting's Painful Lesson: You'll Have No Friends At The Top. Centerfold: Brutus Beefcake. Plus: Orndorff-Blanchard, Tugboat, Teddy Long, Ultimate Warrior, Road Warriors.

November 1990: Sting Wins The NWA World Title! "If This Is A Dream, Don't Wake Me." Centerfold: Road Warriors. Plus: Rude-Warrior, Ric Flair, Funk-Hansen, muscle and power.

February 1991: WrestleMania VII Contest. Centerfold: 1991 calendar. Plus: Sid Vicious, DiBiase-Rhodes, Scott Steiner, Power & Glory, Terry Funk.

March 1991 (Special Issue): 1990—The Year In Wrestling. 1990 In Review, Achievement '90 awards, Unofficial/Official awards, Predictions for 1991.

April 1991: Sgt. Slaughter Guilty Of Treason! Centerfold: Tom Zenk. Plus: Sting, Magnum T.A., Jesse Ventura, Lawler-Gilbert, Hogan & Warrior.

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August 1991 (Special Issue): Supercards '91. Centerfold: Hulk Hogan. Plus: WrestleMania VII, WCW-New Japan, Ultimate Warrior, Owen Hart, Koloff-Luger.

October 1991: Sid Justice: The Second Coming Of Hulk Hogan. Centerfold: Lex Luger. Plus: Hogan-Slaughter, Terrence Taylor, Barry Windham, Williams-Bigelow.

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February 1992: Has Hulk Hogan Had Enough? Centerfold: 1992 calendar. Plus: Sting, Justice-Roberts, hot prospects, Eddie Gilbert.

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January 1993: New WWF World Champion Ric Flair: His SummerSlam Plan Works To Perfection. Centerfold: Jeff Jarrett. Plus: Ron Simmons, Kerry Von Erich, Rude-Roberts-Steamboat.

February 1993: No One Can Cut Down Razor Ramon. Centerfold: Curt Hennig. Plus: Jake Roberts, Pillman-Dustin, Ric Flair-Road Warriors, Rick Rude, Snuka-Muraco.

April 1993: The Steiners: Everything You Always Wanted To Know About Wrestling's Most Awesome Tag Team. Centerfold: Barry Windham. Plus: Bob Backlund, Sting-Muta, Hawk & Sasaki, Davey Boy Smith.

May 1993: WrestleMania Without Hulk Hogan? Centerfold: The Undertaker. Plus: Ron Simmons, Cactus Jack, Madusa-Sherri, WCW-New Japan, Ultimate Warrior.

April 1996: WCW World Title Turmoil. Centerfold: The Kid. Plus: Hulk Hogan, Ahmed Johnson, Bob Armstrong, Michaels-Bret, Public Enemy.

May 1996: Un-Natural! The WWF Has Finally Gone Too Far! Centerfold: Public Enemy. Plus: Jeff Jarrett, Dreamer-Raven, Dan Severn, Ric Flair, Giant.

July 1996: Is Shawn Michaels Leaving The WWF? Centerfold: Lex Luger. Plus: Goldust, Hulk Hogan, Giant, Ric Flair.

October 1996: Peaking Too Soon: Will The Giant Be Ruined By His Own Success? Centerfold: Goldust. Plus: Big Van Vader, Ric Flair, Bulldog, Lex Luger.

November 1996: Giant-Michaels: The War To End All Wars. Centerfold: Dreamer, Beulah, Kimona. Plus: Sunny, Bret Hart, World Peace Festival, Yoshi Kwan.

Winter 1996 (Special Issue): *PWI* 500. Centerfold: Shawn Michaels.

February 1997: Mr. Perfect: "Shawn Michaels Stole My Life." Centerfold: "Psycho" Sid. Plus: Kroffat & Furnas, Vince McMahon, Randy Savage, New Razor & New Diesel.

April 1997: How Winning The Title Saved Psycho Sid's Sanity. Centerfold: Hulk Hogan. Plus: Rocky Maivia, Jeff Jarrett, Unofficial/Officials, Chris Jericho.

February 1998: Sting vs. Hogan—The Match Of The Century! Centerfold: Hogan vs. Sting fight poster. Plus: 16-page Starrcade preview, Perry Saturn, Dude Love.

March 1998 (Special Issue): 1997—The Year In Wrestling. 1997 In Review, Achievement '97 awards, Unofficial/Official awards, Predictions for 1998.

April 1998: The DeGeneration X Debate: Will It Save Or Ruin The WWF? Centerfold: Ken Shamrock. Plus: Bret Hart, Undertaker-Kane, Melanie Pillman.

May 1998: Starrcade Scandal! We Hate To Say It ... But Give The Belt Back To Hogan: Centerfold: Ric Flair. Plus: Mero & Sable, Taz, Taka Michinoku.

June 1998 (Special Issue): The 1998 PWI Poll. Centerfold: Steve Austin. Plus: Sabu, Lex Luger, Sting, Rocky Maivia, Bill Goldberg.

July 1998: WWF vs. WCW: Which Is Better? Centerfold: Benoit, Bill Goldberg, Ahmed Johnson.

October 1998: Bret Screws Bret, Part II. Centerfold: Hunter Hearst Helmsley. Plus: Jim Ross, Marcus Bagwell, WWF controversy, FBI.

December 1998: Gold Rush! Get Ready For The Most Awesome WCW Title Reign Ever! Centerfold: Undertaker. Plus: The Giant, Vader, Guerreros, Ken Shamrock.

Holiday 1998 (100-Page Special Issue): *PWI* 500. Eighth Annual Special.

January 1999: No Evil! Can Today's Fans Accept The Warrior's Creed? Centerfold: Chyna. Plus: Sting, Bill Goldberg, Summerslam.

February 1999: The 50 Most Beautiful People In Wrestling! Centerfold: The Nitro Girls.

March 1999 (100-Page Special Issue): 1998—The Year In Wrestling. 1998 In Review, Achievement '98 awards, Unofficial/Official awards, Predictions for 1999.

April 1999: The Crock! The Title Change That Screwed The World! Centerfold: Chris Jericho. Plus: Bill Goldberg, Tommy Dreamer, Booker T, more Unofficial/Officials.

May 1999: Who Holds The Key To WrestleMania XV? Centerfold: Konnan. Plus: Mark Henry, Sting-Nash, Bill Alfonso, Brian Hildebrand.

June 1999: (100-Page Special Issue): The 1999 *PWI* Poll. Plus: Mankind, Flair & Turner, VMac, Steiners, New Japan-UFO.

July 1999: Warning! This Team Will Self-Destruct In 15 Seconds! Centerfold: X-Pac. Plus: New Jack-Dudleys, Jesse James, Venis & Godfather, Sting-Bischoff-Flair.

August 1999: (100-Page Special Issue): Supercards '99: WWF WrestleMania, WCW Uncensored, ECW Living Dangerously. Plus: Super 8, Bam Bam Bigelow, Jerry Lawler, tag team wrestling.

September 1999: Why Stone-Cold Might Get Out While He's Still On Top! Centerfold: Sting. Plus: Kidman & Misterio, The Rock, Bret Hart, Taz-Sabu.

October 1999: Why The World Must Fear Scott Steiner, By Buff Bagwell. Centerfold: Mankind. Plus: Kane & X-Pac, The Godfather, Perry Saturn, 20th anniversary readers' poll.

November 1999: The Women Of The WWF: There's More To Their Power Than Their Looks. Centerfold: Owen Hart. Plus: Rey Misterio Jr., Roddy Piper, Steiners, Steve Austin.

December 1999: Steve Austin: "CEO This! I'm The Damn Champ!" Centerfold: Rey Misterio Jr. Plus: Randy Savage, Jimmy Hart, WCW youth, Billy Gunn.

Holiday 1999 (100-Page Special Issue): *PWI* 500. Ninth Annual Special.

January 2000: The Millennium Man Mouths Off! An Unforgettable Hour With Chris Jericho! Centerfold: Taz. Plus: Chris Benoit, Sid-Goldberg, Triple-H.

February 2000: The Master Manipulator! How Stone-Cold Controls The WWF. Centerfold: Kane. Plus: Paul Heyman, Hogan-Bret-Sting-Luger.

March 2000 (100-Page Special Issue): 1999—The Year In Wrestling. 1999 In Review, Achievement '99 awards, Unofficial/Official awards, Predictions for 2000.

April 2000: The Rock vs. Stone-Cold: Let's Settle It At WrestleMania. Centerfold: Chris Benoit. Plus: DDP, Goldberg-Sid, more Unofficial/Officials.

May 2000 (100-Page Special Issue): The Y2K *PWI* Poll. Plus: Mitsuharu Misawa, Triple-H, Bret Hart, Hollys, Chyna & Aysa, ECW returnees.

June 2000: Just Wondering, Steph ... Is Triple-H Worth Your Billion-Dollar Inheritance? Centerfold: The Rock. Plus: Heyman-Van Dam, Vader, NWO.

July 2000: Call It A Wrap, Jack! You've Done Your Share ... Go Home! Centerfold: Sid Vicious. Plus: Dusty Rhodes, Disco Inferno, DDP, Dudleys-Hardys.

August 2000 (100-Page Special Issue): Supercards 2000: WWF WrestleMania, WCW Uncensored, ECW Living Dangerously. Plus: Rob Van Dam, greatest supercards, Super 8.

September 2000: Wrestle McMania! Why The Peace Can't Last. Centerfold: Jeff Jarrett. Plus: Eric Bischoff, Dudleys, Raven.

October 2000: Scott Steiner: The Superstar The WWF Let Slip Away: Centerfold: Rikishi. Plus: Shawn Michaels, Austin-Rock, Rhino-RVD.

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off the top rope

by Brandi Mankiewicz

If you wish to contribute to Brandi's mailbag, send your letters to:

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Ft. Washington, PA 19034

Or send e-mail to:
OffTheTopRope @yahoo.com

(Editor's note: The opinions expressed in this column are those of the letter writers and Brandi Mankiewicz herself. They do not necessarily reflect the editorial views of this magazine.)

WHEN DID WRESTLING become surreal? My head is spinning with all this talk of backstage politics, court cases over TV rights, legislation against extreme wrestling, and promotions in total upheaval. When will it all end?

*In the midst of all this turmoil is the solitude of the "**PWI** 500." I couldn't care less about the aforementioned crap, because for now, I am near the end of a four-month journey through the inner workings of the sport. I'm trying to find the brightest newcomers and the falling stars of the pack and come up with a way to put them in numerical order admittedly based on a bunch of very vague criteria. I liken it to trying to catalog the whereabouts and movements of a flock of penguins using a number stamped on a tiny tag crimped to a tiny little leg.*

But, even though I'm in no mood to deal with you cretins, I will take time out of my busy schedule to answer your letters. Sure, I think some of you should be catalogued for scientific study, too, but I'll leave that to The Discovery Channel. Heck, I can't be the champion of everything, can I?

Dear Brandi,

I know what you think of HBK and "Stone-Cold," but you never mention Sting. I think he is a really awesome wrestler. What do you think of him?

MUGGSY JOHNSON
Muggsy1204@aol.com

Dear Muggsy,

Not much, which is why I rarely mention Sting. I don't even consider him to be a wrestler. He's a professional pouter/vacationer in my opinion. When he returns to the ring for more than two or three shows at a time, then I'll waste my precious two pages criticizing him. Until then, he's nothing to me.

There is very little reason to mention Sting these days. Gee, he works one day, then takes another six months off to pout and find himself. I'm surprised Time Warner is so lenient with his off time.

Dear Brandi,

Could you please answer two questions for me?

a) Are you a former wrestler?

b) Is The Rock's father, Rocky Johnson, or one of the Samoans? I truly appreciate your time.

DANNY VALENTI
valentid@prodigy.net

Danny,

a) No.

b) His father is Rocky Johnson and his grandfather is Peter Maivia. Peter Maivia is the uncle of Afa and Sika. That makes Rocky a cousin and half Samoan.

Dear Brandi,

I am a huge Road Warriors fan, even though they are nowhere to be found. I read your comments about them in the October 2000 issue and found them a bit disturbing. But here is what I have to say about your claim that The Road Warriors aren't as dominant as they were in the 1980s: Hulk Hogan, Ric Flair, and Sting are not as dominant as they were earlier in their careers, either, but somehow they still get their fair share of good storylines and wins. Don't you think these guys are pathetic versions are their old selves, too? What do you exactly mean by The Road Warriors not being able to dismantle opponents before their entrance music finishes? The reason they can't is because they are not booked to—otherwise anyone could dismantle their opponents in 30 seconds.

KEVIN MOFID
kmofid@yahoo.com

Kevin,

If The Road Warriors were a team worth caring about, they'd still be at the top of the game, just like Hogan and Flair. But they're not. You can't blame the booking, either, because the promoters can only book whatever the fans want to see. I think Flair and Hogan are both pretty pathetic, too, but at least the fans respond to them.

And, if you don't remember The Road Warriors squashing their opponents in just a few seconds, then you haven't been following their entire

career. The quick kill was a staple of the Warrior diet back in the NWA and AWA. You know, when they were really good.

Dear Brandi,

In the September 2000 issue of *PWI,* you printed a letter from Jannette L. Farrowan. She said Stephanie deserved the Rock bottom and people's elbow from The Rock. I like The Rock as much as the next guy, but Steph is a poor, defenseless, beautiful woman. Ever since The Rock did that, Triple-H is my new fave.

ERIN L. HALL
halle@eriecoast.com

Dear Erin,

It bothers me that it took an act of stupidity on The Rock's part to make you jump to Triple-H's ship. Triple-H doesn't need fans like you, who only follow his lead because of an act of aggression by The Rock toward Stephanie McMahon-Helmsley. Stephanie can handle herself in the ring, and she can certainly help herself against the likes of The Rock. Why is it that when women show vulnerability, they get branded as being defenseless and in need of protection? Stephanie is a headstrong, intelligent woman, not a possum getting squished on the highway. The next time you cheer Hunter's victory, remember that you are just another peon who doesn't even deserve the chance to cheer him.

Stephanie and Triple-H don't need any fair weather fans jumping onto their bandwagon. This happy couple knows how to take care of each other and themselves in the ring.

Dear Queen Brandi,

WCW doesn't get it, do they? They need to get rid of four people: Hulk Hogan, Ric Flair, Arn Anderson, and, most of all, Terry Funk. Guys like Kevin Nash, Bret Hart, Bill Goldberg, and "Diamond" Dallas Page can all headline any pay-per-view. Another guy we should see more of as a champion is Curt Hennig. In my opinion, this guy is a phenomenon.

COLIN ABDULLAH
Cork, Ireland

Dear Colin,

There are a few others in the WCW hierarchy that I'd add to that list of trash day castoffs, but your list sounds like a good start. I do, however, have a problem with your list of torch-bearing hopefuls. I can't see Nash or Hart being out for anyone other than himself. And while we're on the subject of self-love, you can also throw Goldberg and DDP in the mix as well. Unfortunately, I can't see Curt Hennig not getting a random neck spasm when the cards weren't dealt in his direction, but he would be a perfect choice for the new WCW ringleader.

Add Terry Funk's name to Colin Abdullah's list of WCW wrestlers who should be pushed aside to give opportunities to younger, more deserving wrestlers. When will WCW's decision-makers have the Mahoneys to do the right thing?

Letter of the month (taken verbatim from the actual letter to share my torture with you all):

Dear Brandi

what the hell is wcw trying to prove with the new blood ? its just another version of the nwo, same format , different name , the same baseball bat and chair shots , its boring and stale , oh for a match with no interference , and the titles i think are now worthless , i think jeff jarret is a good wrestler but world champ come on !

what do you think?

MARTIN LOY
MAJL@ic24.net

Dear Eric Bischoff and Vince Russo,

See, even the lowest form of Internet dwellers understand that WCW is in sad shape. Even freaks like this guy can tell that the current "Crash TV" formula doesn't work. Hey, for the right price, Queen Brandi will sit you guys down and tell you how to make your company what it once was. □

KREW-CUTS

By Frank Krewda

Crowded house. Say what you will about the Monday night ratings war (and we've certainly said our share here at *PWI*), but WCW has put together some very good shows since **Eric Bischoff** and **Vince Russo** took over on April 10. There were even some weeks during which I thought *Nitro* was more entertaining than *Raw*. Later in those weeks, though, when the Nielsen ratings were released, I found that *Nitro* struggled to break a 3.0, while *Raw* more than doubled that mark.

Unfortunately for WCW, the most exciting episode of *Nitro* can't compete in the ratings against even the worst episode of *Raw*. Speaking from the perspective of a home viewer who watches both shows, the reason is clear: The *Raw* crowd is alive, while the *Nitro* crowd is not. Regardless of who's wrestling, the crowd makes all the difference. Wrestling before a hot crowd is like having the home field advantage in a football game. The wrestlers feed off the energy.

A rowdy crowd can influence the viewer's decision to keep watching or change the channel. Even if the evening's lineup looks mediocre at best, a pumped crowd can make a boring bout seem like the most important in federation history.

Check out the February 17 episode of *Raw Is War*. In the main event, **The Rock, Cactus Jack, Rikishi**, and **Too Cool** vs. **Triple-H** and **The Radicals**, there were no title implications, and the superstars had to share the bill with some mid-carders, but the fans at Reunion Arena in Dallas made this match a must-see event by cheering for all 10 men as if the Cowboys had just won the Super Bowl.

In WCW, the fans have been given little to cheer about, and the crowd comes across as flat, or even worse, absent. *Nitro* rarely sells out, and house shows often fail to deliver the matches that were advertised. The quality of wrestling is erratic, so fans are turned off by the number of filler matches featuring Power Plant trainees and wrestlers who haven't been on TV in months. When WWF fans attend a show, they are encouraged to bring signs and make as much noise as possible. When WCW fans attend a show, their signs are often confiscated. They expect to be disappointed—like they were at The Great American Bash, when Bischoff failed to deliver his "big surprise."

WWF fans, on the other hand, expect to be entertained, and the difference to me is as vast as four ratings points.

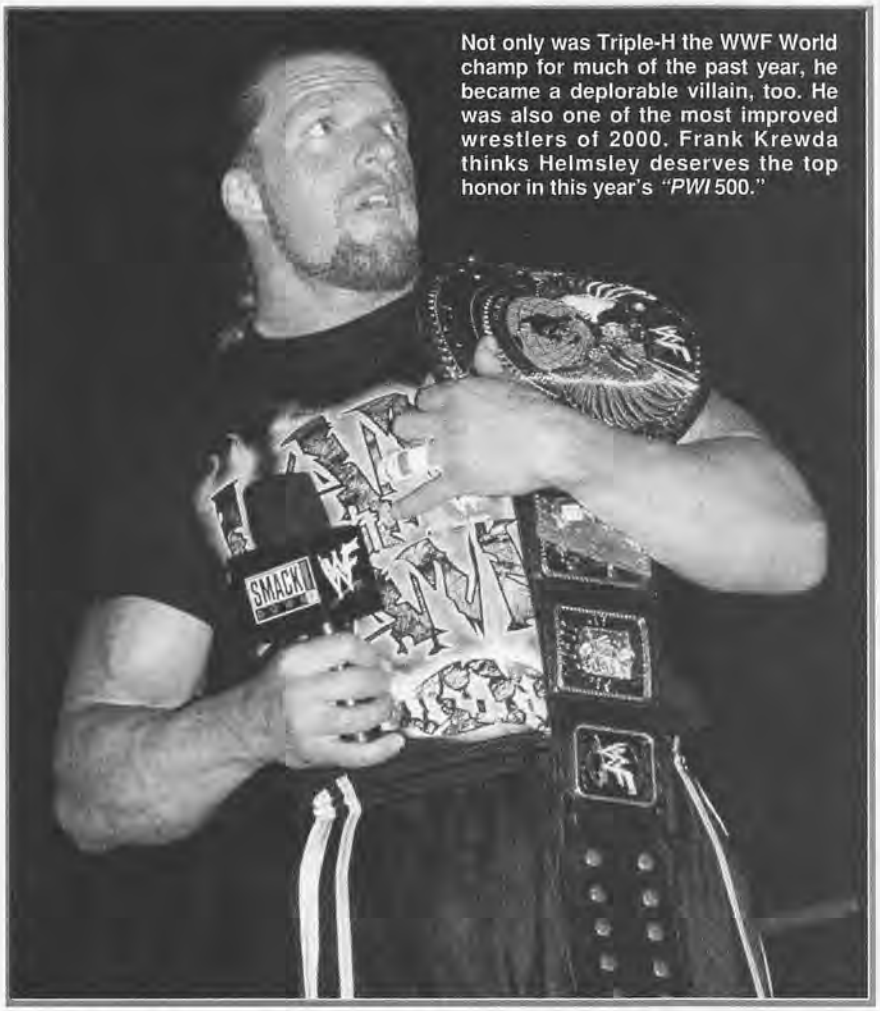
Ban the bomb. While no official announcement had been made as of press time, scuttlebutt around the WWF has **Vince McMahon** calling for the phasing out of any wrestling maneuver that could potentially deposit a wrestler on his or her head. Apparently this decision came after Triple-H was knocked goofy by an **Undertaker** tombstone piledriver in early-June.

My initial reaction to this mandate was positive. In an era in which professional wrestling calls on its rank and file to perform increasingly dangerous spots, a wrestler-friendly directive like this should boost morale and assuage industry critics who sit at their PCs waiting to lay blame when an accident occurs.

Then I realized what McMahon's decree really means. It means that pure wrestling will be distilled even further from the sport.

Some of the moves believed to be on Vince's chopping block include the piledriver (both sitdown and tombstone versions), release-style suplex-

If Vince McMahon has his way, you might never see Kane or The Undertaker perform a tombstone piledriver again. In an effort to reduce head and neck injuries in the WWF, McMahon reportedly wants to phase out certain maneuvers.



Not only was Triple-H the WWF World champ for much of the past year, he became a deplorable villain, too. He was also one of the most improved wrestlers of 2000. Frank Krewda thinks Helmsley deserves the top honor in this year's *"PWI* 500."

es, and even the relatively safe DDT. Also, it is widely believed that **Perry Saturn** has already been ordered to change his finisher from the brainbuster to a top-rope elbowdrop and **Tazz** was told to go easy on the suplexes.

This line of thinking could have disastrous results for the WWF. Triple-H, the World champ, would be left without a finishing maneuver if the pedigree were outlawed. The Undertaker and **Kane** would be reduced to plodding humongoids who would have to share the choke-slam with every other big man in the sport. And **Jeff Hardy** could slip back into obscurity if the swanton dive becomes a no-no.

Sure, injury can result from any of these moves, but in wrestling, as in all contact sports, there is the inherent risk of getting hurt. Should the NFL crack down on blocking and tackling? Should boxing outlaw punching?

If McMahon wants to placate the **Phil Mushnick** types, he should cut down on the use of tables and chairs and ban that hot new WWF equalizer—the ring bell—not ban wrestling maneuvers from the wrestling ring.

***"PWI* 500" preview.** Since June 30 was my last day in the editorial offices of London Publishing (though I will continue to write this column each month), I was unable to attend this year's *"PWI* 500" meeting. Still, I had some strong ideas on how the list should read. Here's how my top 10 of 2000 shapes up:

10. Scott Steiner. Steiner missed lots of time early in the year, but the fans never forgot about him. He hasn't won a world title yet, but he has held the WCW U.S. belt for a long time, and only **Bill Goldberg** and **Hulk Hogan** elicit a stronger reaction from WCW fans.

9. Mike Awesome. I considered Awesome for the top spot, but he left ECW and became a mid-carder in WCW. It cost him. Still, his brutal reign in ECW can't be overlooked.

8. Kenta Kobashi. Another strong year from the three-time All-Japan Triple Crown champion. He's missing some time now following knee surgery, but he has successfully defended his title since March, despite being injured most of the time.

7. Justin Credible. Justin's proven worthy of his current push in ECW and deserves this spot after having a great year in which he won two World tag team titles and the World belt.

6. Kensuke Sasaki. The IWGP heavyweight champ has quietly put together a great year during which he won the title and wrestled successfully in tag matches. Sasaki broke New Japan tradition by accepting challenges from junior heavyweights **Jushin Liger** and **Kendo Ka Shin**.

5. Chris Benoit. If the "500" focused on wrestling talent alone, Benoit would be my hands-down choice for the number-one spot. In my opinion, he is the best wrestler in the world. In terms of accomplishment, Benoit had only a fair run as WWF I-C champ and a bogus WCW World title reign.

4. Vader. I don't know if Vader qualifies for this year's list because of all the time he's missed, but two Triple Crowns, a tag title, and a Carnival tournament championship should count for something. Besides, he revived All-Japan during a very critical time.

3. The Rock. Rock has become the most visible wrestler on the planet. He has replaced **Steve Austin** as the WWF's poster boy, and his catchphrases have become part of American vernacular. He is too much of a force to rate lower than third.

2. Jeff Jarrett. For readers who disagree, put your anti-WCW bias aside and evaluate Jarrett on the merits of what he accomplished last year: winning the WWF I-C title, the WCW U.S. title, and five WCW World titles. He has become WCW's marquee guy.

1. Triple-H. Helmsley was given the difficult task of carrying the WWF on TV and exceeded everyone's expectations. Aside from holding the title for most of the year, Triple-H became the most convincing bad guy in the sport and continues to improve both on the microphone and in the ring. □

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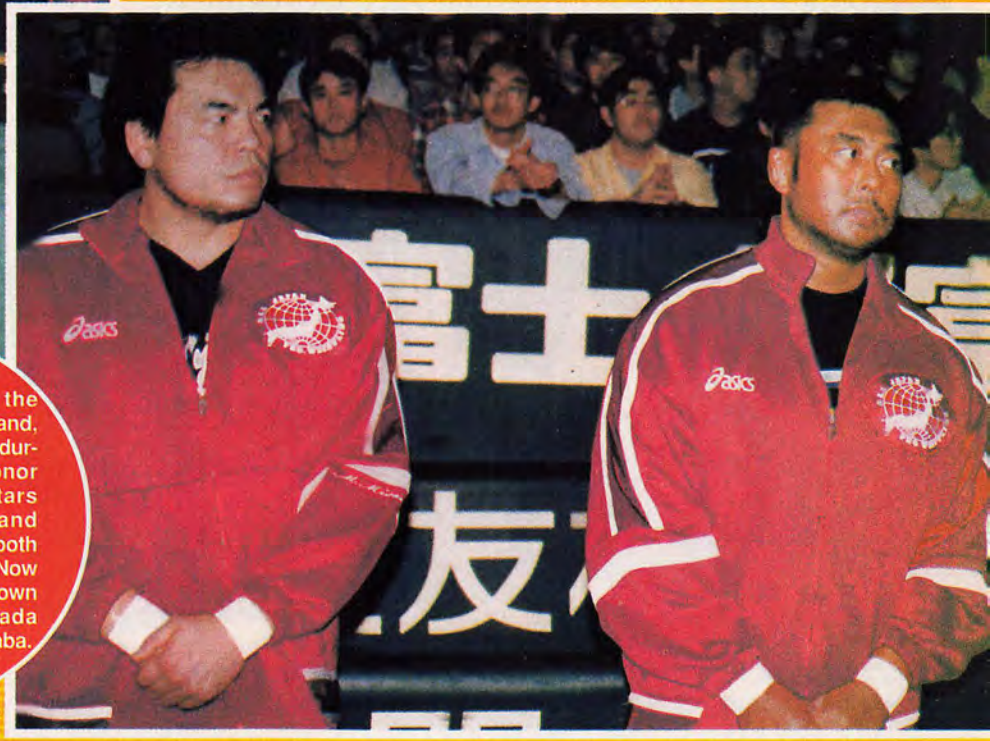
TRYING TO MAKE SENSE OF THE JAPANESE WRESTLING SCENE?

Don't Look For Answers At Home!



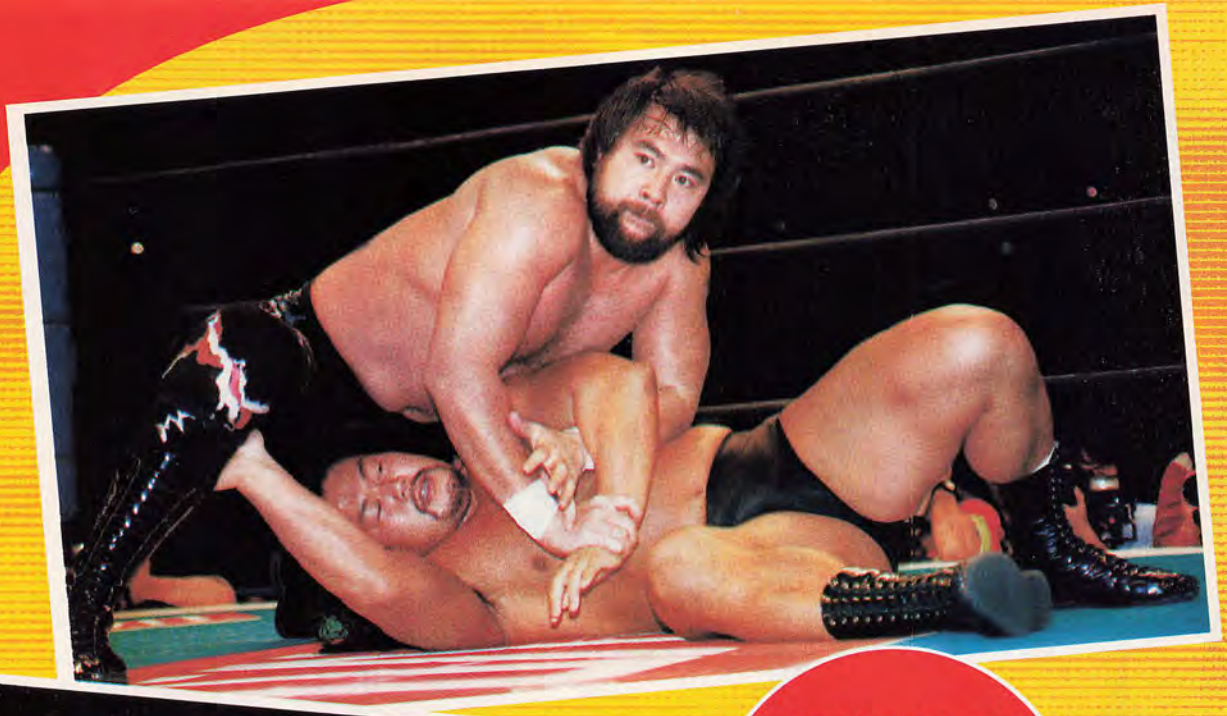
Motoko Baba places the boots of her late husband, Giant Baba, in the ring during a ceremony to honor him (above). Superstars Mitsuharu Misawa and Toshiaki Kawada were both there that night (right). Now Misawa has started his own company, while Kawada remains loyal to Mrs. Baba.

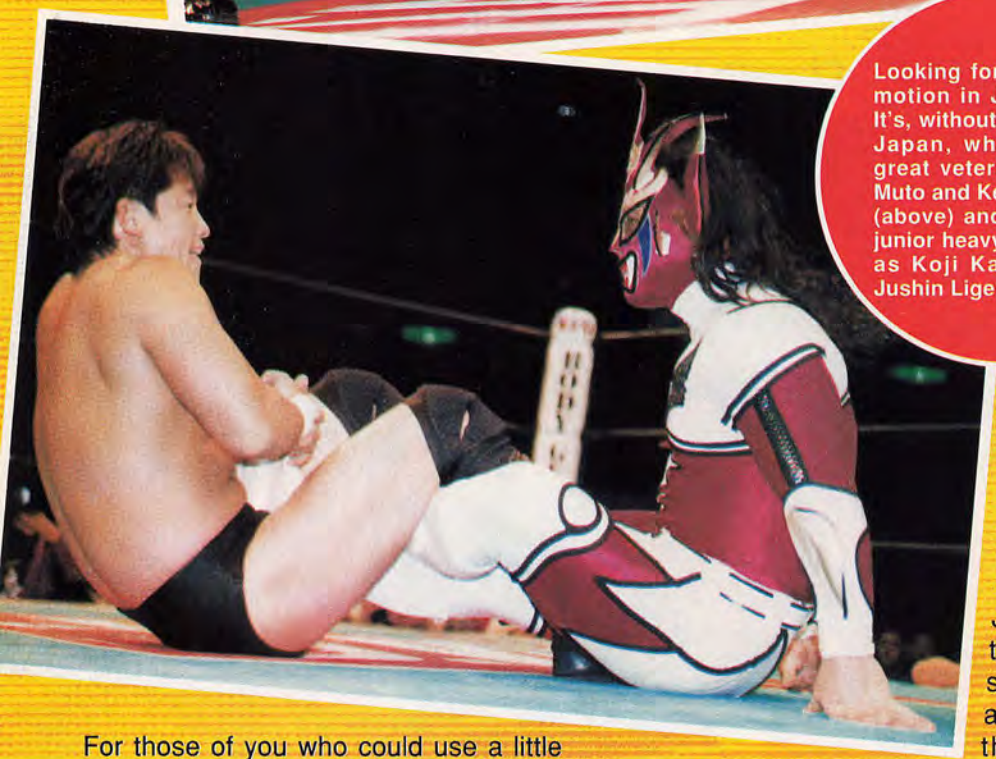
Just when you thought you had that whole Japanese scene figured out, Mitsuharu Misawa goes and forms his own company . . . taking most of another big company's talent with him. Suddenly, everything has changed in the Far East

By Mike Spillane

Photos by Koichi Yoshizawa

WITH WRESTLING BEING televised almost every day of the week in the United States, it's easy to overdose on the stuff. If you've taken to ingesting all the programs out there, you've probably realized how little actual *wrestling* is being done on many of the shows.





Looking for the top promotion in Japan today? It's, without a doubt, New Japan, which features great veterans like Keiji Muto and Kensuke Sasaki (above) and outstanding junior heavyweights such as Koji Kanemoto and Jushin Liger (left).

For those of you who could use a little more action to go with all the interviews, comedy, and backstage confrontations, the alternative has long meant directing your attention elsewhere.

For fans just beginning to take interest in international wrestling, the timing couldn't be worse. It's difficult enough trying to understand Japanese wrestling as it is; the characters, themes, and rivalries might seem nonsensical to American fans used to a steady diet of WWF, WCW, and ECW. That's to say nothing of the language barrier issue. You've probably heard about All-Japan and New Japan, but what's with this new promotion being started by All-Japan megastar Mitsuharu Misawa?

What the heck is really going on over there? Can it be compared to what's going on here? The answer to that question is an emphatic ... well, sort of.

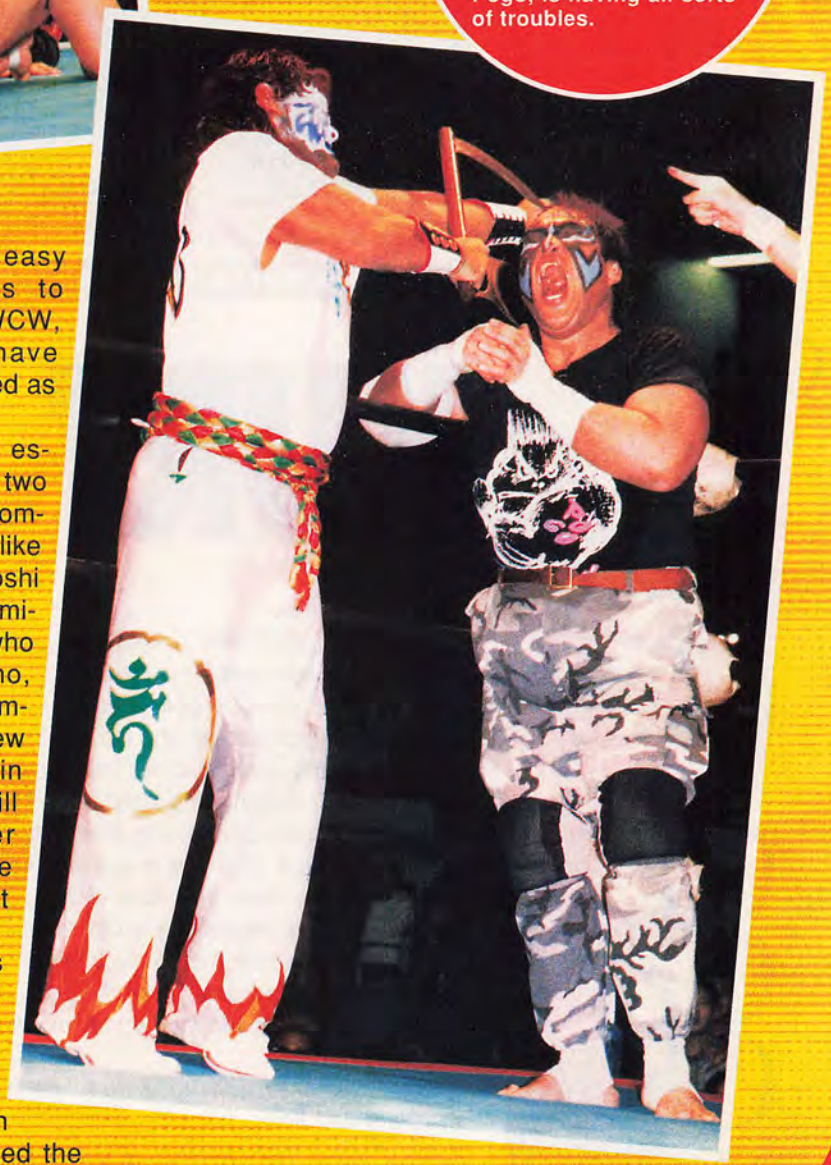
Before we get to Misawa, let's take a step back. Just five years ago, there were some simple comparisons to make. New Japan, home to stars like Keiji Muto (The Great Muta) and Jushin Liger, was the top company in Japan, and at that time also the top company in the world. It was easy to correlate New Japan with the WWF. The more traditional All-Japan, a close second with stars like Misawa and Kenta Kobashi, seemed like the equal of WCW. AJPW focused more on pure wrestling than sports entertainment.

The wild, hardcore style of Frontier Martial Arts Wrestling (FMW) begat ECW here in America, and the two are similar enough that they have worked together over the years.

All those comparisons worked so well then. The Big Three in the U.S. matched up with the Big Three in the Orient. That made for an easy starting point for fans eager to get a grasp on the complex Japanese wrestling scene.

Unfortunately, what worked then doesn't really work now. With his resignation from All-Japan (where he had been company president and a headliner), Misawa has obliterated the previous landscape and started a new era in *puroresu* history.

While most of All-Japan's top stars left with Misawa to join NOAH, the promotion got some good news when veteran Genichiro Tenryu made a surprise return to the All-Japan fold.



All-Japan isn't the only promotion in Japan that is struggling right now. FMW, which made a name for itself by featuring ultraviolent matches between warriors like Atsushi Onita and Mr. Pogo, is having all sorts of troubles.

With it, the easy comparisons to the WWF, WCW, and ECW have been eradicated as well.

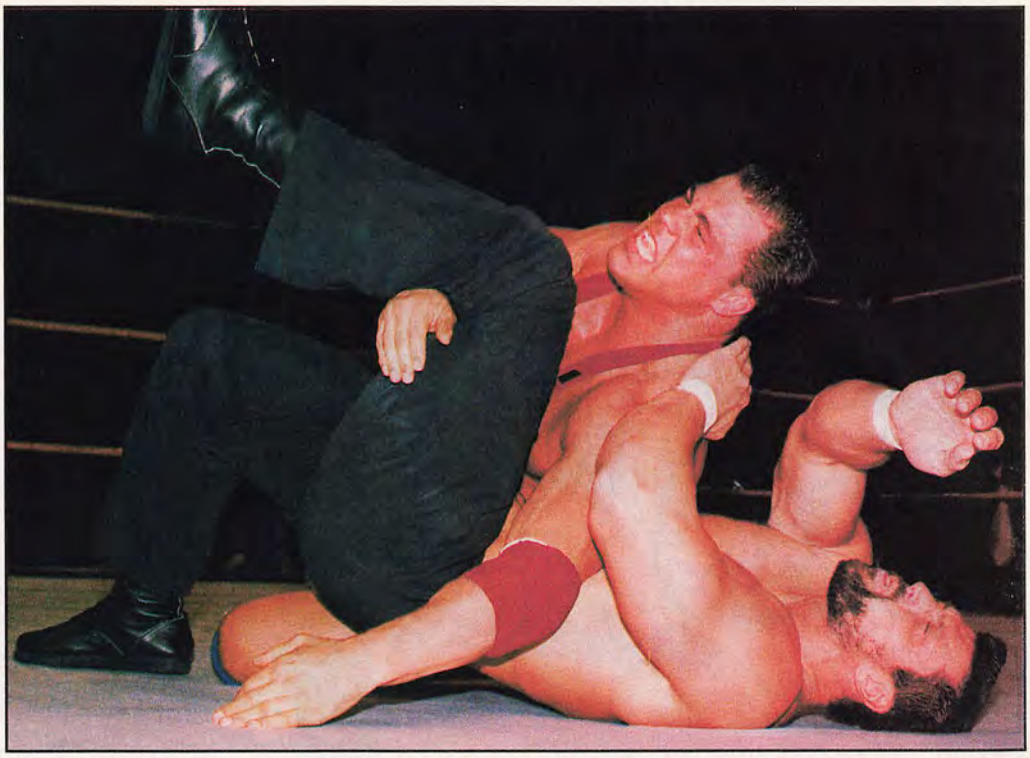
With All-Japan essentially broken into two companies, New Japan is poised to remain dominant for some time. Relatively young stars like Kensuke Sasaki, Hiroyoshi Tenzan, and Satoshi Kojima are just beginning to assert their dominance in the ring, while veterans like Muto (who recently showed up in WCW), Masa Chono, and Tatsumi Fujinami remain loyal to the company and continue to draw fan interest. New Japan may have seen a steady decrease in business over the last few years, but it still generates more revenue than any other *puroresu* company. (The WWF is, by far, the biggest wrestling promotion in the world at this point.)

FMW (the Japanese home of ECW's Masato Tanaka and a promotion in which Mike Awesome shined as The Gladiator) isn't exactly the Japanese ECW anymore, either. Really, to be accurate, ECW was always the American FMW; the hardcore style of madmen such as Atsushi Onita and Mr. Pogo predated the style's advent in ECW by years. While FMW trails behind both All-Japan and New Japan much like ECW lags behind both the WWF and WCW domestically, they now share little other than the unfortunate designation of being number three.

FMW is presently more sports entertainment than anything else, and sports entertainment is a borderline dirty concept to a lot of Japanese fans. The strict adherence to that style of promoting has cost

(Continued on page 56)

press conference...



Kurt Angle desperately tries for a pinfall against Steve Blackman. You're not likely to see him in the ring against "The Lethal Weapon" too many more times. He has entered the World title picture in the WWF.

KURT ANGLE

INTEGRITY, INTENSITY, AND intelligence. Those are the three "I's" by which Kurt Angle lives his life and conducts his career. Inside the ring, the "I's" have given Angle very much of which he can be proud: a gold medal in the 1996 Olympics, the WWF Intercontinental and European championships, and the 2000 King of the Ring tournament triumph.

Unfortunately, such success has spawned a fourth "I"—inflation. As in Angle's ever-inflating head. Indeed, Angle's king-sized ego is turning fans and fellow wrestlers off more and more each day. Instead of showing their "Olympic hero" the respect he deserves for his achievements, WWF fans can't wait to see him get humiliated in the ring.

These days, more and more WWF superstars are looking for their opportunity to do the humiliating. Two immediately come to mind. Triple-H wasn't too bothered by his wife's infatuation with the Olympic hero initially. Now he believes Angle wants to pursue more than just a friendship with Stephanie. Then there's The Undertaker, who has been furious with Angle since Angle dumped milk and food on his motorcycle, then issued some very insincere apologies for what he did.

But that's okay with "King Kurt." He hears the jeers of the fans and the taunts from the wrestlers and thinks he understands where they come from. After all, Angle is royalty, while these others are commoners. In the natural order of things, commoners neither appreciate nor understand the privileged. Never have, never will. Therefore, Angle expects the reaction he gets and tries not to let any of it affect him.

Editor-in-Chief Dave Lenker, Associate Editor Frank Krewda, and Senior Writer Dan Murphy were recently summoned to this king's court in Pittsburgh to get Angle's take on the fans, the WWF, and what being King of the Ring means to him.

DAVE LENKER: Well, Kurt, congratulations on becoming the 2000 King of the Ring.

KURT ANGLE: Thank you. I appreciate that. I would also appreciate if you called me by my proper title. That's King Kurt, please. Or King Angle ...

DAN MURPHY: *(Getting up)* I'm outta here, guys ...

LENKER: C'mon, Dan ...

ANGLE: That's okay—let him go. He's just like all the other commoners: He has no self-control.

MURPHY: I'm not like any commoner, but I'll be damned if I'm calling you "King" every time I have something to say.

> **"It's my responsibility as an Olympic hero—and now as King of the Ring—to be honest with the commoners. If they can't handle the truth, they shouldn't be my fans."**

ANGLE: Speaking of being damned, did you know that 150 years ago, I, as your king, could've sentenced you to the stockade for insubordination?

MURPHY: Oh, really?

ANGLE: It's true.

KREWDA: I'm sure it is, but can we get down to business here, please? Kurt, even your toughest critics admit that you're a great wrestler and really know how to work a microphone. The fans seem to know that, too. They would probably support you if you gave them the chance. Instead, you choose to insult them before each match. Why?

ANGLE: I just point out facts. Like that night in Indiana when I said the Pacers choke in the playoffs. They always do. It's true. Two weeks later, they choked against the Lakers. At King of the Ring, I said that the majority of Bostonians are overweight and unemployed. Check the statistics. It's true.

LENKER: Yeah, but the fans come to the shows to be entertained, not insulted or reminded of their personal shortcomings.

ANGLE: Maybe not, but it's my responsibility as an Olympic hero—and now as King of the Ring—to be honest with the commoners. If they can't handle the truth, they shouldn't be my fans. Either way, I really don't expect them to understand.

MURPHY: What do you mean, your highness?

ANGLE: Well, let's face it, I *am* royalty. I'm *not* one of the people. I'm *not* one of them, and that causes resentment. It's just a natural reaction.

MURPHY: Maybe there wouldn't be any resentment if you stopped talking down to people. Maybe the fans would even identify with you.

ANGLE: Identify with me? What do these beer-swilling, in-breeding slobs know about Olympic glory? What do they know about being a king? They can't even comprehend the amount of sacrifice involved in being an American hero. Half of them would get winded just carrying my crown for a day. The WWF is entering a golden age. The fans should enjoy the reign of King Kurt I. Instead, they resent me.

KREWDA: It seems like Triple-H resents your reign as well.

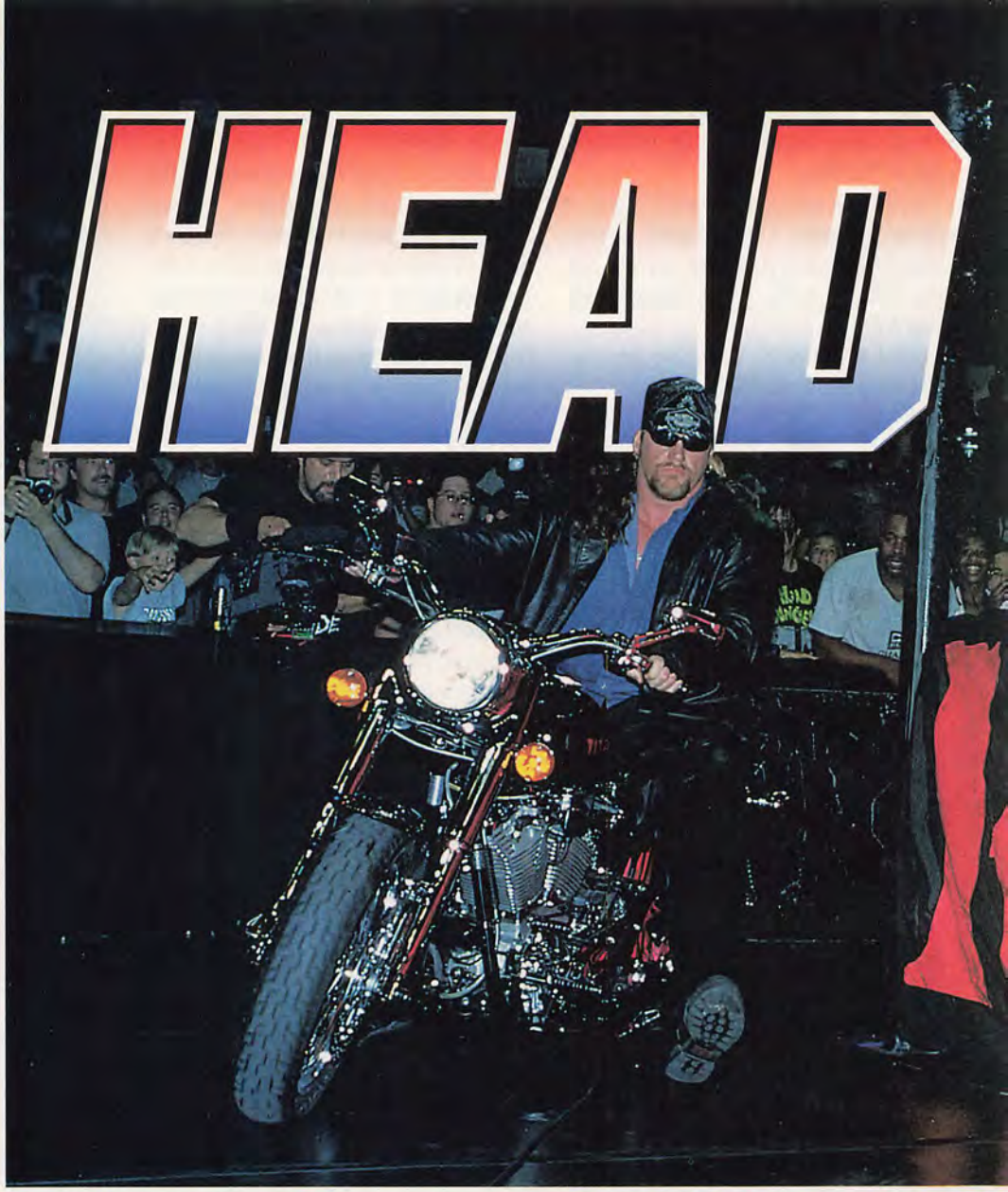
ANGLE: As well he should. Triple-H sees his days on top of the WWF coming to an end. He's desperate and ...

(Continued on page 58)

Every issue, reporters from PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED will participate in an incisive press conference with a top wrestling star. The questions will be demanding. And the answers will reveal the innermost thoughts of the giants of the sport.

HEAD

The Undertaker is reinvigorated, thanks to his new biker image and a much-needed rest. But emotional baggage and recurring injuries could prevent him from capturing a fourth WWF World title



By Harry Burkett

THE UNDERTAKER GOOSED the throttle of his Harley-Davidson, spooking members of the McMahon-Helmsley Faction into nine different directions. Triple-H jumped to the arena floor, Vince McMahon slid under the bottom rope, Shane McMahon ran through the crowd, Road Dogg and X-Pac bumped into each other trying to escape, and the twin she-devils—Stephanie McMahon-Helmsley and Tori—shrieked before they ran for cover. Pat Patterson and Gerald Brisco, as usual, acted like Keystone Cops.

Similar scenes have been replayed many times since The Undertaker returned to the WWF in May. Is Triple-H afraid Undertaker will bump him out of World title contention? Is Vince afraid Undertaker will attempt another hostile takeover of the WWF, as he did with his Ministry of Darkness last year? Are Road Dogg, X-Pac, and the rest simply afraid 'Taker will beat the crap out of them?

The answer is "yes" to all of the above.

The haunting specter of The Undertaker hung over the WWF during his absence. Triple-H wondered if 'Taker would be an ally of the Faction. The Rock wondered if he would have to go through Undertaker to get to Triple-H. Kane wondered if his half-brother's shadow would again engulf his career. They all remembered the evil apprenticeship of The Big Show and how Undertaker was able to cast his diabolical spell over the unlikeliest of men.

When The Undertaker returned, everyone realized that no one's spot was secure.

"I respect a lot of the guys in the WWF because of their personal character, and I respect just about all of them because of their ability," said The Undertaker, spitting chewing tobacco as he spoke. "I like The Rock's stuff. Kane is my blood. Triple-H really is that damn good. But don't confuse respect with friendship. I came back to re-establish my presence and to win the WWF title for the fourth time. Nobody is gonna get in my way. Not factions, not the 'top guy,' not blood. This is fair warning."

Fighting for urns and feuding with his half-brother side-

HOG!

Does 'Taker have enough gas in his tank to rumble to the top?

When The Undertaker returned to the WWF, he immediately took his game to "The Game." No, Taker didn't take a shovel and try to bury Triple-H in a make-shift grave. He simply planted the then-WWF champ through a table with the help of Kane.

As the leader of the sinister Ministry of Darkness in 1999, 'Taker called on all his dark minions for help during his feud with "Stone-Cold" Steve Austin. In 1999, Undertaker was evil incarnate.

tracked him a few times, but no one doubts Undertaker's ability to focus. Once 'Taker sets a goal, he doesn't stop until he achieves it.

Undertaker's resilience is directly related to his knack for reinvention. Throughout the years, 'Taker has made cosmetic changes and personality tweaks to remain in step with the times. The white-faced ghoul who defeated Hulk Hogan for the WWF World title in 1991 was different from "The Dead Guy" whom Vince McMahon promoted in 1992. The honest and hard-working Undertaker who defeated Sid Vicious for the WWF title in 1997 was profoundly different from the hooded cult leader who formed the Ministry of Darkness in 1999.

The 2000 version of The Undertaker is the most human of them all. He rides a motorcycle, wears leather and denim, and chaw drips out of the corner of his mouth. He's more redneck than spiritual ringleader. He's more biker dude than ghostly spook.

Indeed, he's an American ... well, you know how Kid Rock's song goes.

"People talk about my different personalities and how I've changed over the years," said The Undertaker. "My inner being doesn't change. I reveal different aspects of my personality depending on the circumstance. The guy you see now, the guy on the bike wearin' blue jeans, that's the closest you'll get to the real Undertaker. That's me. McMahon, Helmsley, and the rest of 'em realize they're not dealing with a character. All the gimmicks have been stripped away. There's no need for theatrics. They're dealing with the man himself—and that's why they're as scared as hell."

Indeed. The Undertaker isn't as spooky, but he's as frightening as ever. He's chosen the right persona at the right time. But there are still many obstacles. His relationship with his half-brother, Kane, is one.

Just before Undertaker's return, Kane finally found his voice—and he made use of it by challenging Triple-H, the WWF World champion at the time. That, of course, immediately put Kane at odds with his half-brother. Unlike

The relationship between The Undertaker and his half-brother, Kane, is a dichotomous one. It's apparent that they want to get along, but more often than not they end up trying to rip each other's throats out. Will their current union last?

the past, however, Undertaker is not at all hesitant to fight "The Big Red Machine." Like The Undertaker, Kane has changed, too.

"That's precisely why I don't mind fightin' my brother," said 'Taker. "His head's finally on straight. Now I can fight Kane without worryin' about his mental handicaps. He's ready for me ... and I'm ready for him."

The Undertaker remains a marketable commodity. His head games with Kane are over. Is there anything else that could hinder his success?

Consider the reason Undertaker was on the sidelines. He went on hiatus because of not one or two injuries, but because of the cumulative effect of several. He suffered from a broken orbital bone below his eyes a few years ago. He wrestled in several matches with a nearly broken ankle last year. When it appeared Undertaker might re-enter the ring early in 2000, his persistent groin injury prevented him from returning. There were also problems with a pectoral muscle. Physically, he may not be up to the task.

"That's bull," said 'Taker. "I wouldn't have bothered coming back to the WWF if I weren't 100 percent ready. I could've taken off an entire year, two years. Hell, I could've retired permanently. When I got healthy again, I decided to buy a few more Harleys. Another WWF title ought to pay for those. I'm at the height of my abilities, physically and mentally. Who the hell can stop me?"

The Undertaker hasn't suffered a clean loss since his return to the WWF, despite the best efforts of the McMahon-Helmsley Faction and even The Rock and Kane. In the past, The Undertaker's mental and physical obstacles have been more formidable adversaries than his in-ring opponents. With those demons conquered, Undertaker's tank is filled up—and his hog is ready for the long road ahead. □

Undertaker will have to work up the ladder of contention against men like Christian (above) to get a shot the WWF title. With The Rock on top, will 'Taker turn against the forces of good (below) and return to the dark side?

VAMPIRO: WHY WITH

Vampiro fell to the scorpion death-drop on more than one occasion, but he claims he won their feud by sending Sting to the depths of hell at the Bash.

Brothers-in-paint become brothers-in-flame. At one time, Sting and Vampiro were sincere friends (left). That was until Vampiro set their friendship ablaze at The Great American Bash (right).

HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH STING WENT UP IN SMOKE

Sting and Vampiro were allies inside the ring and close friends beyond the arena doors. Vampiro admits he planned Sting's demise long before their friendship ended. He claims it was for Sting's own good

By Harry Burkett

THE GRISLY SHOT of a burning Sting falling from the scaffolding at The Great American Bash will be etched in many fans' minds forever. It appeared to be a tragic end for one of the sport's greatest heroes. Sting will return to action, but how can he ever be the same?

Everyone watching the backstage monitors grimaced as Sting fell. Whether he was Sting's friend or foe, what kind of person could approve of attempted homicide on a wrestling pay-per-view? Yet someone was laughing as Sting, who looked like a flaming meteor, plummeting 25 feet to the arena floor.

Vampiro, the perpetrator of the crime and the man who took delight in the ill-fated human torch match, is a sadist. Nothing pleasures Vampiro like the misery of others.

Contrast that hellish image of Sting's fall with a snapshot taken only a few months ago. It's a photograph of Sting and his good friend Vampiro. They called themselves "brothers-in-paint." Sting and Vampiro seemed to defy the odds as legitimate pals in the cannibalistic world of pro wrestling.

"Those guys did seem to be legitimate friends," commented WCW official Terry Taylor. "I don't understand how everything unraveled. I wouldn't call them pals who hung out together, like Sting and Lex Luger in the old days. It was more of a mentor-apprentice relationship.

"It started when Vampiro would strike up conversations with Sting and ask his opinion about different things. Before long, Sting would look for Vampiro to see if he had any questions or needed advice. I don't know if Vampiro was simply luring Sting into a trap or whether something happened to change him later. In my opinion, Vampiro was sincere in the beginning."

Sting and Vampiro enjoyed a complementary relationship. Sting was not offended by a younger wrestler encroaching upon his trademarked persona. How could he? Vampiro bore the white paint and austere wardrobe long before Sting brought it into fashion in WCW.

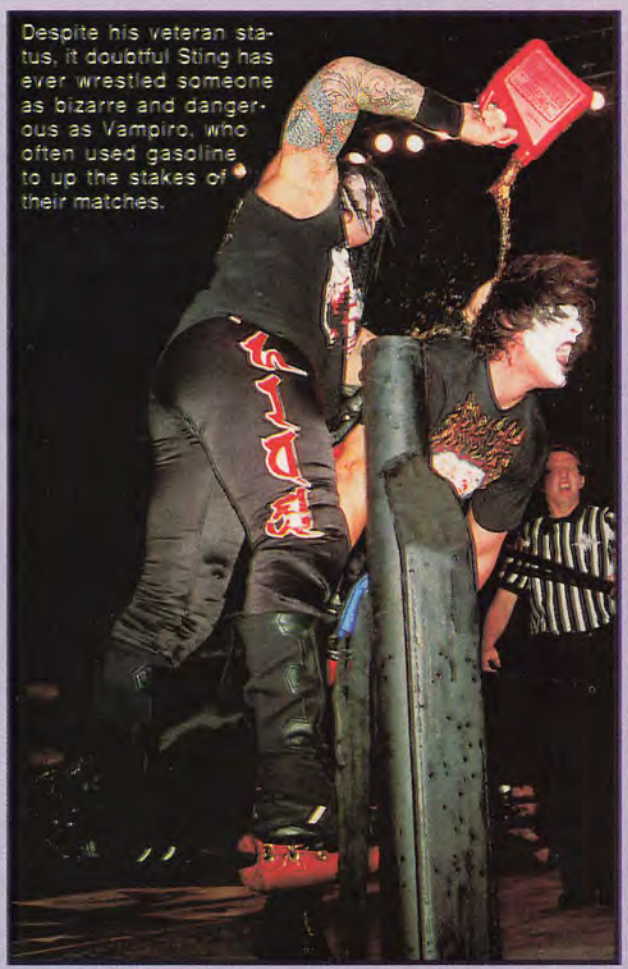
Likewise, Vampiro seemed flattered that Sting wanted to serve as his mentor. Vampiro benefited from Sting's experience and became a threat to Sid Vicious, Ric Flair, Jeff Jarrett, Lex Luger, and other stars who dominated WCW during the early months of 2000.

But everything changed when Eric Bischoff and Vince Russo returned to WCW on April 10. They pitted The New Blood against The Millionaires Club. Vampiro and Sting found themselves on opposing sides. Bischoff and Russo urged Vampiro to usurp Sting's persona and his status within the federation. Vampiro embraced Bischoff and Russo's commands with wicked zeal.

Why would Vampiro set out to destroy a man who had offered him so much?

"Sting gave me *nothing!*" spat Vampiro. "I was performing the outreach. *I* was the tutor. *Sting* was the student. People want to say Sting was helping *me?* That's what I wanted them to believe. I wanted Sting to become more like me. Why would I want to become like Sting? So I could sell kiddie masks? So I could have lots of little Vampiros? So I could become a busted up former champion with no soul? No, I offered my hand to Sting. It is better to have an evil soul than no soul at all."

Vampiro asserts he and Sting enjoyed a real friendship. As the two men became closer, he started to find weaknesses in Sting's character. He thought Sting was shal-



Despite his veteran status, it doubtful Sting has ever wrestled someone as bizarre and dangerous as Vampiro, who often used gasoline to up the stakes of their matches.

The scorpion deathlock is enough to contain almost any opponent, unless your opponent doesn't care about wins and losses. The outcome of their matches meant little to Vampiro, who was playing for Sting's soul.

low and had no idea what sacrifice was about. It wasn't long before Vampiro decided to take Sting on a dark spiritual journey. The return of Bischoff and Russo gave him the perfect opportunity.

Others claim the friendship was a sham from the start. "Vampiro's friendship with Sting was a complete fraud," said Dale Torborg, who has also suffered physical and mental anguish because of Vampiro. "I overheard their conversations, like most of the boys did, and Vampiro wasn't trying to convert Sting to the dark side or any of that crap. He was schmoozing him, and Sting tried to be nice. Vampiro was figuring out the best way to stab him in the back. Believe me, I know how that psycho operates."

Vampiro was setting up Sting for a fall, figuratively and literally.

According to Vampiro, their "friendship" was the first step toward Sting's salvation. Or was it anti-salvation? Whatever it was supposed to be, Vampiro must deal with the harsh reality of its failure.

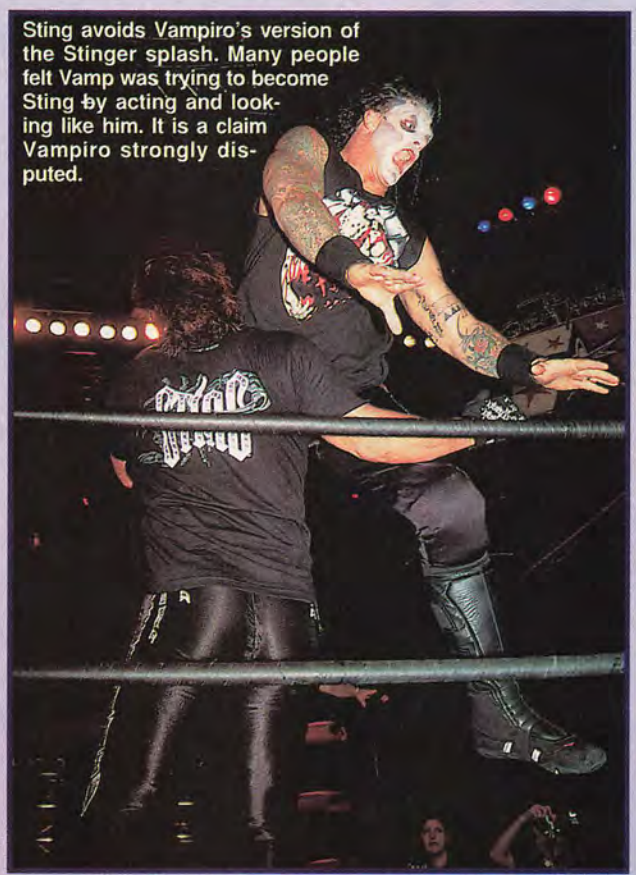
"Failure? *Hah!*" scoffed Vampiro. "The metamorphosis is not yet complete. I never had any misconceptions of how deeply Sting was embedded in this phony, materialistic world where marketing and merchandising are paramount. Oh, no, I didn't think I could convert Sting over a cup of coffee or a camping trip where we could establish some phony male bonding. The friendship was step one. The betrayal and the demise of Sting as we knew him was step two. Soon, step three will begin—and I'm about to get freaky with it!"

Sting may be scarred, charred, and carry a limp, but Vampiro is convinced the seven-time former NWA/WCW World champion will return. It remains to be seen whether he exacts revenge upon Vampiro—or becomes his ally.

"It doesn't matter whether he's my ally or not," said Vampiro. "Before Sting met me, he never tasted the flames of hell. I took him there against his will. No matter what happens in the future, Sting will never forget the stench of his own burning flesh and his life force escaping his body as he fell from the top of the arena. Sting lives on the dark side now, regardless of his feelings toward me. My job is done. I sacrificed our friendship to awaken Sting. We are not brothers-in-paint. Sting and I are brothers-in-fire!"

While there are conflicting stories in regard to the friendship between Vampiro and Sting, all of them share the same belief: Vampiro's betrayal was calculated and deliberate, not the result of a simple disagreement. Vampiro would have everyone believe he is leading Sting on a bizarre spiritual quest. Others, like Dale Torborg, insist Vampiro is using his betrayal of Sting to boost his own career—which would make him as phony and materialistic as he accuses Sting of being.

Whether Vampiro is evil, bizarre, phony, or materialistic, there aren't many positive adjectives to describe the man. There's no doubt Vampiro is dangerous—and Sting should be glad their friendship is over. □



Sting avoids Vampiro's version of the Stinger splash. Many people felt Vamp was trying to become Sting by acting and looking like him. It is a claim Vampiro strongly disputed.

Lots of blood was spilled between Sting and Vampiro in their feud. The bottom line: Vampiro is still wrestling, while Sting is home recovering from injuries and wondering about his future.

WHAT PHATU WILL DO WHEN HE'S NO LONGER THE OF THE JOKE

The stink face is an effective maneuver for two reasons: One, it usually suffocates Phatu's opponents, and two, it humiliates them to the point at which they are no longer focused on the match.

RIKISHI'S BACKUP PLAN

By Dan Murphy

HE WAS THE Intercontinental champion for two weeks. He's a 14-year veteran with an impressive power-based repertoire that includes devastating variations of the Samoan drop and seated piledriver. But let's face it—Rikishi has his ample posterior to thank for most of his popularity.

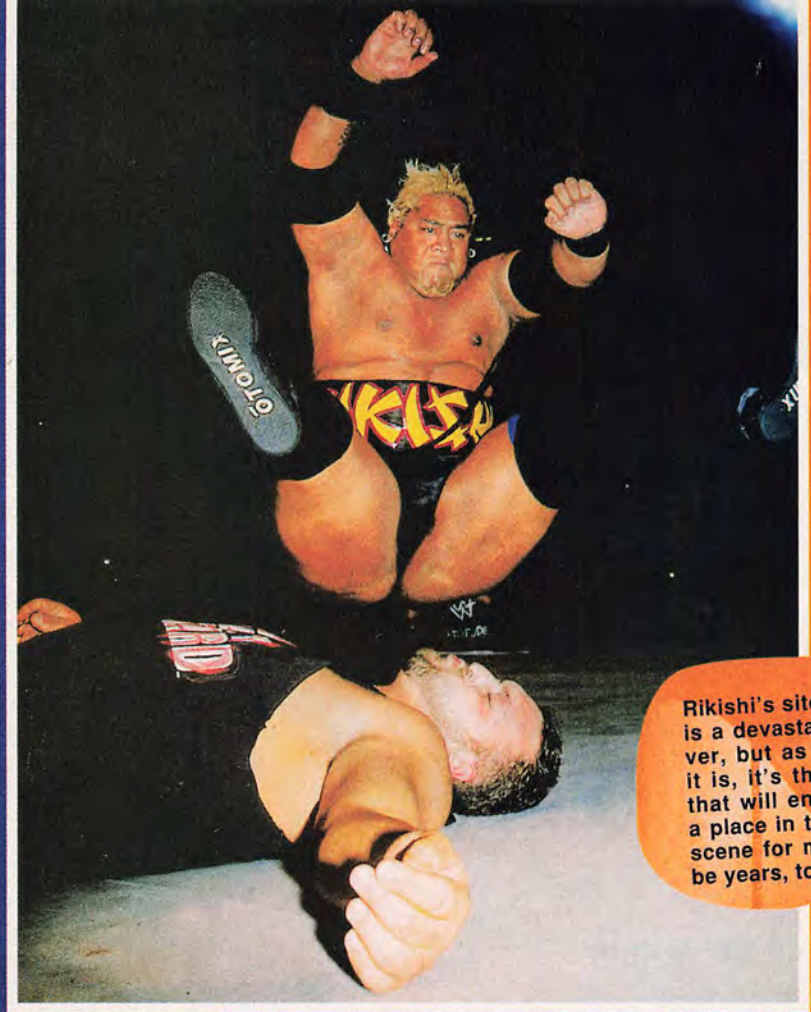
As impressive a competitor as Rikishi is, that butt is just unavoidable. There's the requisite prematch extreme closeup of the folds of cellulite cascading down the big man's thighs. There are the signs in the audience on which various would-be Mapplethorpes try their hands at capturing the essence of Rikishi's most widely recognized asset. The guy even uses "Back that ass up" as his catch-phrase. Is it possible that the true Rikishi Phatu is hidden in the shadow of his own rear end?

You may think all Rikishi wants to do is shake his rump, but his stink face is more than a finishing maneuver. It's actually an insurance plan for his future success

Seriously, the attention to Rikishi's rear could be a long-term threat to his career. Rikishi runs the risk of becoming known as a novelty act rather than a respected competitor. And the thing about novelty acts is that their fame is often fleeting.

Andre the Giant started off as a novelty act, but after years of training and improvement, he managed to shake that label. Eventually, he was recognized for his unusual blend of size and skill. Yokozuna managed to do the same, but only after nearly crippling a half-dozen of the WWF's biggest stars.

Of course, Andre and Yokozuna are exceptions to the rule.



Rikishi's sitdown splash is a devastating maneuver, but as effective as it is, it's the stink face that will ensure Rikishi a place in the WWF title scene for months, maybe years, to come.

Does anybody remember that other giant, a man named Giant Gonzalez? How about Bastion Booger? And do we really have to mention Doink and Dink? Those better-left-forgotten names from the past are examples of wrestlers whose long-term success was compromised due to their inability to escape their poor choice of gimmicks.

What happens when Rikishi's buns become the flavor of the month for last month? What if the big man decides he wants to make a run at the World title and drops weight to improve his stamina? Will his popularity diminish in proportion to his shrinking tush?

Rikishi's been around long enough to see other unfortunate competitors allow themselves to be pigeonholed, and he's not about to let it happen to him. Rikishi has a backup plan, and he's already laying the groundwork for that plan: Rikishi's making enemies—and the more the better.

Winning the I-C belt was a tremendous first step for Rikishi to ensure that people take him seriously. Title reigns in today's WWF are fleeting, though, and even past I-C champs like Road Dogg, The Godfather, and D-Lo Brown are finding themselves in huge ruts. That's why Rikishi is making as many people hate him as possible.

"It's really an ingenious plan," one WWF source said on condition of anonymity. "Rikishi's starting as many feuds as he can and making people demand matches against him. That way, even if his popularity starts slipping a little, he'll have plenty of high-profile opponents demanding matches against him. I can see a scenario where the WWF champion would be begging to put his title on the line against Rikishi."

How is a guy as personable as Rikishi going about making enemies? By using that reeking stink face.

"There's really no other reason for the stink face other than to infuriate an opponent," Jim Ross observed. "Whenever you turn your back on an opponent, no matter how vulnerable he or she may seem to be, you're putting yourself at a disadvantage. But Rikishi keeps doing it, and just about everyone that's

(Continued on page 57)

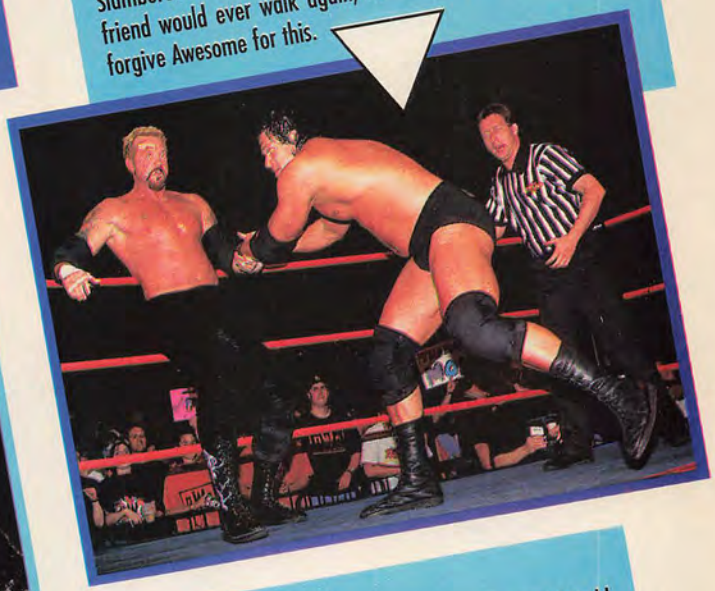
Rikishi played this strategy brilliantly against Chris Benoit in the KOTR quarterfinals. After agitating Benoit on *Smackdown*, "The Crippler" became more interested in gaining revenge than advancing in the tournament. The result: a first-round DQ loss for Benoit.

GREATEST MATCH

vs. Ric Flair, Sting, Hollywood Hogan, April 11, 1999. We all know the story. Everyone said Page was crazy for trying to make it as a wrestler after working as manager/color commentator. Surely he had no chance of becoming even a mid-carder in a major federation. Well, if you tell DDP he can't do something, he'll do everything in his power to prove he can. Eight years after his pro debut, he won the first of three WCW World titles by beating three of the game's all-time greats in this four-way.

MOST HATED OPPONENT

Mike Awesome. It didn't take Mike Awesome long to make enemies in WCW. He attacked Kevin Nash on his first night with the company, and barely a month into his stint, he threw Chris Kanyon off a three-tiered cage and through a ramp below at Slamboree. When DDP saw this and wondered whether his best friend would ever walk again, he vowed revenge. He'll never forgive Awesome for this.

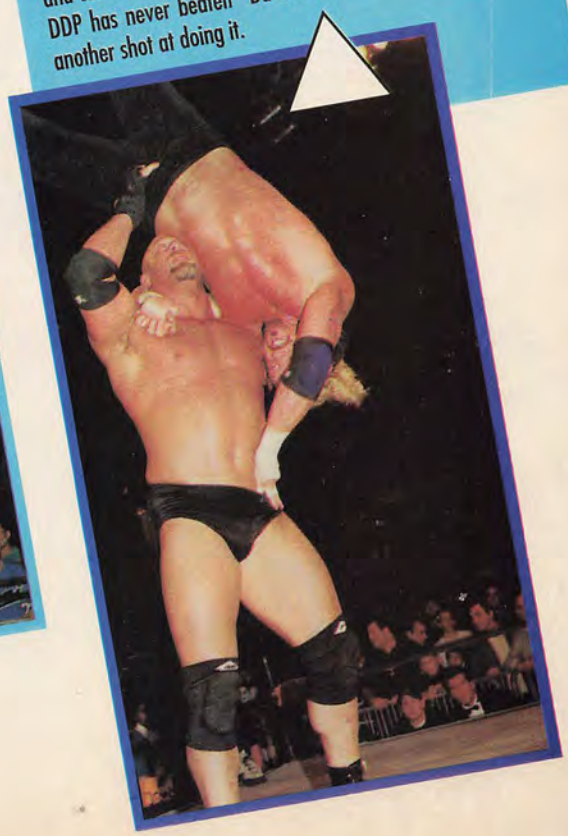


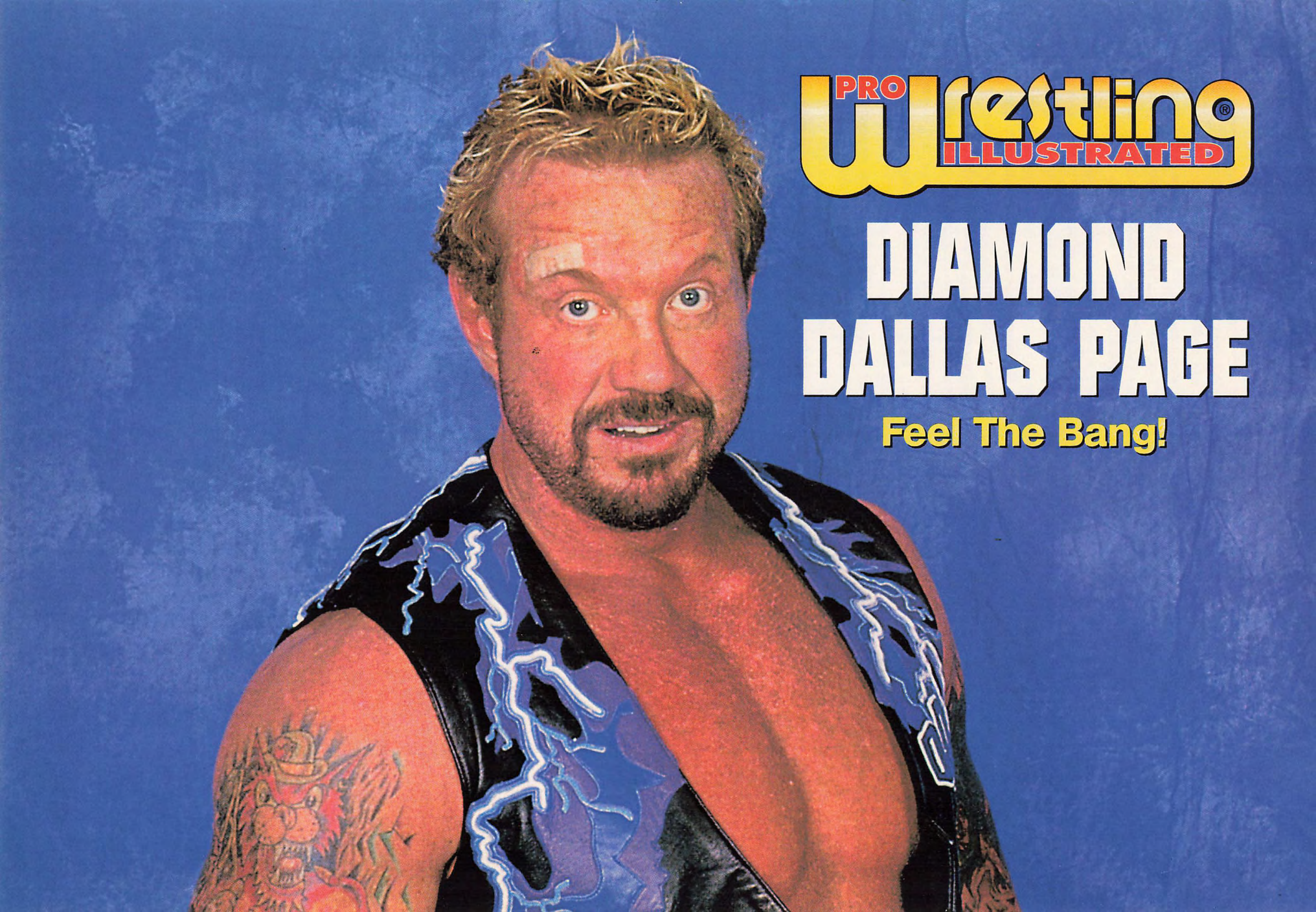
FAVORIT MANEUVER

Diamond cutter. Numerous American stars have adopted variations of the Ace crusher as finisher over the last few years. Steve Austin's "Stone-Cold" stunner may be the most famous, but DDP's Diamond cutter is arguably the most dangerous. He is especially proud of his ability to execute it from all angles and quickly enough that his opponents have virtually no chance of blocking or countering it.

TOUGHEST OPPONENT

Bill Goldberg. When Page earned his shot at the WCW World champ at Halloween Havoc, quite a few people expected him to be the man to end Goldberg's long undefeated streak. He didn't do it, but he offered Goldberg a spectacular challenge and came much closer than anyone to that point had. So far, DDP has never beaten "Da Man," but you know he'd love another shot at doing it.




PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED
DIAMOND DALLAS PAGE
Feel The Bang!

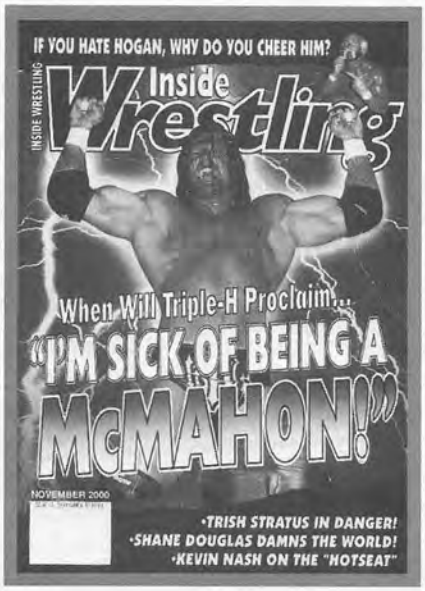
close-up:

"DIAMOND" DALLAS PAGE

"DIAMOND" DALLAS PAGE has had one of the most unusual careers in wrestling history, taking the backward route from manager to wrestler … The 6'5", 260-pound superstar began his wrestling career in 1988, managing Paul Diamond and Pat Tanaka in the AWA. The team won the AWA World tag team title … Moved on to Florida Championship Wrestling and worked as a TV commentator with Gordon Solie … Managed The Freebirds in early-1991. They won the WCW World tag team title … Also managed Scott Hall, then known as The Diamond Studd … After The Freebirds lost the U.S. tag team title at the 1991 Great American Bash, Page decided to become a wrestler … Wrestled his first match on November 18, 1991, teaming with Hall … Tore his rotator cuff in a match in 1993 and missed 11 months … Returned in late-1994 and began challenging wrestlers to arm-wrestling matches … Kimberly, Page's wife, became his Diamond Doll … At Fall Brawl, beat The Renegade for the WCW TV title .. Lost the belt to Johnny B. Badd (Marc Mero) on October 29, 1995. He also lost Kimberly, who agreed to join Badd's camp if Page lost … Lost to Badd in the rematch at World War III … Was voted *PWI's* Most Improved Wrestler of 1995 … Lost $6.6-million—every penny to his name—when he was pinned by Badd at SuperBrawl VI … Page's interference later helped Lex Luger beat Badd for the WCW TV title. Badd then left for the WWF … Lost what was billed as a retirement match against The Booty Man. Kimberly sided with The Booty Man … Found a loophole in his contract that allowed him to return … Won the Battlebowl battle royal at Slamboree to become Lord of the Ring … The NWO asked Page to join the group. He refused … Lost to Eddie Guerrero in the finals of the U.S. title tournament at Starrcade '96 … Kept refusing to join the NWO … In February 1997, Randy Savage attacked Page from behind and knocked him out … Page and Kimberly started discussing whether she was ready to rejoin him in the ring … Kimberly, meanwhile, posed for *Playboy's Nude Celebrities* … She returned to the ring at Uncensored … She was in the locker room area when Page was being interviewed by Gene Okerlund about Randy Savage, who had joined the NWO … Savage and Elizabeth came out carrying a copy of *Playboy's Nude Celebrities* and insulted Kimberly … Kimberly then came stumbling out from the dressing room covered with spray paint … When Page tried to defend his wife, Savage spray-painted him, too … Battled Savage in the main event of Spring Stampede on April 6 …It ended with Page using his Diamond cutter to finish Savage … Attacked Savage at Slamboree '97 and accused him of kissing up to Hogan … At *Nitro* the next night, Savage injured Page's ribs … Wrestled Savage in a no-disqualification match at the 1997 Great American Bash … Savage won after using Hall's WCW World tag team title belt … Page and Lex Luger wrestled Savage and Hall at Clash of the Champions XXXV. Savage punched Page in the right eye, temporarily blinding him. When Luger went to help Page, DDP thought he was a member of the NWO and gave him a Diamond cutter … At a later *Nitro,* Luger accidentally placed Page in his torture rack after DDP had come to his aid … Page and Luger were on the verge of war, until they realized their real enemy was the NWO … Page and Luger beat Savage and Hall at Fall Brawl '97 … Lost to Savage at Halloween Havoc when an impostor Sting (Hulk Hogan) interfered … When Ric Flair was attacked by WCW U.S. champ Curt Hennig six days prior to Starrcade '97, Page took his place. Won his first U.S. title by pinning Hennig … Savage vs. Page was voted *PWI's* Feud of the Year … Offered a U.S. title shot to Chris Benoit on February 5, 1998 … Raven's Flock attacked Page during the match … Retained the U.S. title in a three-way match against Benoit and Raven at Uncensored '98 … Had a brutal match against Raven at Spring Stampede on April 19. Horace, Hulk Hogan's nephew, bashed Page with a stop sign, and Raven won the belt … The NWO split into two, NWO Hollywood and NWO Wolfpac, but Page joined neither side … At *Thunder* on June 4, teamed with Luger—a Wolfpac member—against The Giant and Brian Adams. Page and Luger won. Luger invited him to join the Wolfpac … Page was seemingly ready to accept when Hogan and Chicago Bulls star Dennis Rodman attacked him… On June 17, Rodman and Hogan appeared on *The Tonight Show With Jay Leno.* When Leno told Rodman and Hogan he had a surprise for them, out walked Page with Utah Jazz star Karl Malone … WCW signed Hogan and Rodman against Page and Malone for Bash at the Beach … Interference by The Disciple enabled Hogan to pin Page … At *Nitro* the next night, Page was ambushed by NWO Hollywood … Eric Bischoff and Hogan teamed against Page and Leno at Road Wild on August 8, 1998 … Leno pinned Bischoff after *Tonight Show* bandleader Kevin Eubanks hit him with a Diamond cutter … Won the War Games match at Fall Brawl '98 to earn a shot against the WCW World champ at Halloween Havoc … Battled Goldberg at Havoc in an outstanding match. Goldberg won with a spear and a jackhammer. After the match, the two embraced … Won his second U.S. title by pinning Hart on October 26, 1998 … On November 30, The Giant Hart regain the U.S. title … Page used his Diamond cutter to beat The Giant at Starrcade '98 … When Scott Steiner made insulting remarks about Kimberly, Page went after him, too … Wrestled Steiner at SuperBrawl '99. If Steiner won, he was to get Kimberly for 30 days … Steiner used his Steiner recliner to beat and injure DDP … Came back in March, but was told by WCW President Ric Flair that he'd have to beat Hogan to get to Steiner. DDP lost when Flair's interference backfired … At Spring Stampede, Page, Hogan, Sting, and Flair battled in a four-way for Flair's World title … DDP won after hitting Flair with a Diamond cutter … But the fans were no longer on his side … Lost the World title to Sting on April 26, but won it back the same night … Lost the belt again to Nash on May 9 … Formed The Triad with Bam Bam Bigelow and Kanyon … He and Bigelow won the World tag team belts on May 31; he and Kanyon won them on June 13 … Challenged Benoit to a match at the August 5 *Thunder.* Benoit had beaten Page three days earlier. Page hit Benoit in the face with his tag team belt and won … At Road Wild, Benoit defended the U.S. title by defeating Page despite interference by Bigelow and Kanyon … Lost to Goldberg at Fall Brawl … Feuded with Flair after Flair made crude remarks about Kimberly … Returned at Mayhem on November 21 and aided Kimberly in her match against David Flair … Beat David Flair in a crowbar-on-a-pole match at Starrcade '99 … Page's personal life once again took center stage when he accused Buff Bagwell of hitting on Kimberly … At Souled Out on January 16, 2000, lost a last-man-standing match to Bagwell … Kimberly was named guest referee for a match between Page and Bagwell on January 17. Kimberly counted the pin for DDP, but she didn't stick around to celebrate … Along with Hogan, Sting, Luger, and Nash, formed The Millionaires Club to take on The New Blood, a group led by Vince Russo and Eric Bischoff … Kimberly betrayed DDP and helped Jeff Jarrett beat him for the World title on April 16 … On April 17, Bischoff declared that "Kim was the whipped cream on 'Easy E's' cake."… DDP couldn't be held back by security, but Kimberly couldn't be held back from delivering divorce papers to him … Won his third WCW World title by beating Jarrett on April 24 … Lost the belt two days later to actor David Arquette when Arquette (DDP's partner) pinned Bischoff in a tag team match … Arquette later betrayed Page, too … Now taking a break to allow injuries ro heal, but should be back in the WCW mix soon. □

this month in....

Inside Wrestling


IF YOU HATE HOGAN, WHY DO YOU CHEER HIM?
INSIDE WRESTLING
Inside Wrestling
When Will Triple-H Proclaim...
"I'M SICK OF BEING A McMAHON!"
NOVEMBER 2000
•TRISH STRATUS IN DANGER!
•SHANE DOUGLAS DAMNS THE WORLD!
•KEVIN NASH ON THE "HOTSEAT"

You saw King of the Ring. Whether you like him or not, you have to admit **TRIPLE-H** did get screwed out of the WWF title. We're wondering when he'll proclaim, "I'm sick of being a McMahon!" ... Are you one of the thousands who have had it with **HULK HOGAN**? We know there are a lot of you out there, but if you hate him so much, why do you cheer him? ... **TRISH STRATUS** has been put through a table, locked in the Walls of Jericho, and stink-faced. Frightening question: What will it take to get her to stop interfering?

All this—and much more!—
in the November 2000 issue of
Inside Wrestling

NOW ON SALE!

The Wrestler

ECW MIDYEAR REPORT!
THE WRESTLER
The Wrestler
Why the commish job scared HBK!
Why The Rock dreads facing Benoit!
SPECIAL FEAR ISSUE!
Why Ric Flair's future terrifies him!

You don't want to miss our special ***FEAR*** issue! We'll tell you why **THE ROCK** ought to fear **CHRIS BENOIT** and avoid hooking up with him in the ring again at all costs! ... We'll also let you know why **RIC FLAIR** is terrified of his own future. It doesn't have that much to do with his wrestling career, either ... And we'll give you the real story on why **SHAWN MICHAELS** had to give up his job as WWF commissioner. He had some fears of his own ... And you won't want to miss our special in-depth ECW Midyear Report!

All this—and much more!—
in the November 2000 issue of
The Wrestler

NOW ON SALE!

WWF vs. WCW THE MONDAY NIGHT WAR

By Harry Burkett

The TV shuffle continues ... As the fall schedule nears, it appears *Raw*, *Superstars*, and *Live Wire* will be moving to a revamped TNN, *Sunday Night Heat* will be moving to MTV, and *Smackdown* will remain on UPN. USA Networks, which has an appeal pending, was unsuccessful in its legal efforts to keep the WWF from transferring its programs from USA to the Viacom-owned channels.

With the WWF's deal with Viacom now looking secure, TNN made it official: *ECW On TNN* has been canceled; September 22 will be the weekly program's last air date.

Despite the unruly reputation ECW earned during its tumultuous year on TNN, it's still a hot commodity in the wrestling-hungry cable market. One possible scenario is ECW moving to the Fox-owned FX. There's no doubt Rupert Murdoch, although he has ridiculed Ted Turner for airing pro wrestling in the past, wouldn't mind giving his old rival and the Time Warner empire competition in yet another arena: the wrestling arena.

For several weeks, rumors persisted that Eric Bischoff was closing a deal that would allow Fox to air WCW programming at about the same time SFX—a nationwide concert-producing and ticket-brokering company—was negotiating to assume ownership of WCW's arena/house show business. The buzz over WCW gaining a programming slot on Fox has since quieted.

The latest out of the media rumor mill is that WCW is considering splitting into two separate federations in light of the Hulk Hogan-Jeff Jarrett-Vince Russo fiasco at Bash at the Beach. It would be a split more in spirit than in legal reality, as Russo would direct *Nitro* on TNT while Hogan, Eric Bischoff, and Ed Ferrara would use *Thunder* as a home base for a new promotion on TBS.

Several questions arise from this arrangement. Could Hogan and Bischoff co-exist within their own pseudo-company? Is Hogan still affiliated with WCW at all? Could WCW and the new promotion on TBS capitalize on *Raw's* move to TNN?

Speculation is the greatest form of self-amusement and it doesn't cost a dime.

Corporate media darlings ... Vince and Linda McMahon must be savoring their increasing respectability in the business world. The McMahons, once characterized as carnival barkers at a circus sideshow, have made the WWF a respected brand name—and have earned considerable recognition for their achievements as of late.

Hoover's Online featured Vince McMahon in its biweekly "Headshot" feature, which detailed the WWF chairman's humble beginnings in a North Carolina trailer park, the worldwide expansion of the WWF, the earnings of the federation since going public, and the launching of the XFL.

In the July 11 edition of the *Chicago Sun-Times*, TV critic Phil Rosenthal depicted Linda McMahon as "a quiet, middle-aged woman" who "speaks only when it improves her silence." The story paid tribute to her tough-mindedness toward business and her subtle, yet hands-on approach.

Why all the media attention? Everyone respects a female CEO who can survive in the boardroom wars, especially with as formidable a partner as Vince McMahon. Not only that, but the WWF remains one of the largest family-run businesses in America.

The Chris Benoit vs. Eddie Guerrero match was the lowest-rated segment of the July 3 *Raw*, drawing only a 4.0. Of course, if Benoit and Guerrero were still wrestling on *Nitro*, a 4.0 rating would have been considered miraculous.

THE MONDAY NIGHT NUMBERS (Note: Each ratings point represents 750,000 households.)

JUNE 19

	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	5Q	6Q	7Q	8Q	9Q	10Q	11Q	12Q	OR	Composite
Raw	—	—	—	—	4.3	5.3	5.5	5.6	5.5	6.5	6.6	6.4	6.9	5.8 (5.2*)
Nitro	2.6	2.6	3.2	3.2	2.8	2.4	2.2	2.4	—	—	—	—	3.2	2.7 (2.6*)

*Head-to-head composite

Tuesday Morning Quarterback: **Ratings are cooling during the summer season, and the Monday night wrestling shows were hit particularly hard by Game 6 of the NBA Finals on NBC this week. Interestingly, *Nitro's* numbers are holding fairly steady, indicating that *Raw* has a larger share of the casual viewing audience. The gap between *Raw* and *Nitro* became relatively narrow—within 1.5 rating points—during the 5Q segment, featuring Kurt Angle vs. Buh Buh Ray Dudley and Kevin Nash vs. Ernest Miller, respectively.**

THE MONDAY NIGHT NUMBERS

JUNE 26

	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	5Q	6Q	7Q	8Q	9Q	10Q	11Q	12Q	OR	Composite
Raw	—	—	—	—	5.2	5.3	5.8	6.4	7.1	6.7	6.8	7.2	7.9	6.4 (5.7*)
Nitro	2.9	3.3	3.3	3.4	2.6	2.4	2.3	2.3	—	—	—	—	2.9	2.8 (2.4*)

Tuesday Morning Quarterback: Nitro's **first hour culminated with then-WCW tag champs The Perfect Event vs. Shane Helms and Shannon Moore earning a 3.4 rating. Highlights of Jim Duggan's battle with kidney cancer aired during the same segment. Duggan vs. Bill Goldberg earned only a 2.6 rating in 5Q. *Nitro* rebounded to 2.9 during the overrun segment, which featured the four-way among Bill Goldberg, Kevin Nash, Scott Steiner, and then-WCW champion Jeff Jarrett. *Raw's* overrun one hour later—featuring a three-way among Triple-H, Kurt Angle, and WWF champion The Rock—scored five full points higher.**

THE MONDAY NIGHT NUMBERS

JULY 3

	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	5Q	6Q	7Q	8Q	9Q	10Q	11Q	12Q	OR	Composite
Raw	—	—	—	—	4.0	5.1	4.6	5.0	5.7	5.8	5.9	5.7	6.4	5.3 (4.9*)
Nitro	2.3	2.6	2.7	2.8	1.9	1.6	2.2	1.8	—	—	—	—	2.6	2.3 (2.0*)

Tuesday Morning Quarterback: **The fourth of July weekend sank the ratings for both federations. *Raw's* opening segment has become its lowest-rated segment since the WWF began scheduling a match—rather than a McMahon-Helmsley Faction promo—at the top of the show. This week, that segment featured an old *Nitro* standby: Chris Benoit vs. Eddie Guerrero. *Nitro* hit bottom during the next quarter-hour, dropping to a 1.6 during a Vampiro-Demon match and a David Flair-Daffney-Crowbar encounter. Demon and David Flair in the same segment? That's ratings suicide!**

THE MONDAY NIGHT NUMBERS

JULY 10

	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	5Q	6Q	7Q	8Q	9Q	10Q	11Q	12Q	OR	Composite
Raw	—	—	—	—	4.6	5.1	5.2	5.8	6.1	6.6	7.2	6.9	7.4	6.0 (5.4*)
Nitro	2.5	2.9	3.2	3.6	2.4	2.2	2.0	1.8	—	—	—	—	2.5	2.6 (2.2*)

Tuesday Morning Quarterback: **It's surprising that *Nitro* didn't get a bigger boost from the previous night's Bash at the Beach, the scene of the huge Hulk Hogan-Jeff Jarrett-Vince Russo controversy. WCW's low number of PPV buy rates is the reason why *Nitro* is no longer helped much by a PPV the night before. More surprising was that the four-way main event—featuring Jeff Jarrett, Chris Kanyon, Bill Goldberg, and Scott Steiner—topped out at a 2.5. A three-way contest between I-C champion Val Venis, Kane, and Rikishi aired on *Raw* at the same time.**

And we're sure business types love talking about wrestling—even if they'll never admit it.

Wrestler-turned-governor-turned-soap actor? The mat sport has always been compared to soap operas, and it wasn't long ago that wrestling was compared to *The Young And The Restless* within the pages of this very magazine. The similarities proved to be irresistible for the governor of Minnesota.

Jesse Ventura has said he's a diehard soap opera fan. Waking up at noon following a tough night of wrestling and traveling used to be a regular routine for Ventura. To "The Body," watching soaps was as natural as watching wrestling.

According to the Associated Press, Ventura missed the airing of his July 11 cameo on *The Young And The Restless* due to his participation in an education conference in St. Paul. "You go out, you do it, you have fun doing it," said Governor Ventura. "I'll see a tape of it later. I did it weeks ago. It's not fresh on my mind right now."

Ventura played himself, appearing with Eric Braeden, who plays the wealthy industrialist Victor Newman on the CBS program. In one scene, Victor asked Ventura why he didn't run for President. "Why don't you run with me?" Ventura shot back. "We'd be the dream ticket."

Victor wondered aloud who would take the top spot. "That would be a problem," Ventura responded. "If our egos clash, I don't think our country could survive it." □

HONEST BILL. In terms of shockers, it ranks right up there with anything WCW has done over the past decade, including the formation of the New World Order and some of the cards it passes off as pay-per-view events. Not too often do you see a major wrestling federation look itself in the mirror. Even less often do you see that look appear on its Web site.

But that's what happened this summer, when a column by Bill Banks appeared on WCW's Web site, wcw.com. The column started as follows: "Low ratings, low attendance, bad morale, backstage problems, a skeleton crew in the office, etc., etc. Calling a spade a spade, it's the current state of WCW."

My goodness! Next thing you know, we'll be seeing headlines like, "Hulk Hogan Bald!" and "Ric Flair Old!"

Federations don't like to admit they have problems. Every *Nitro* is the greatest ever, every pay-per-view is a must-see, and, of course, Eric Bischoff told us we had to buy The Great American Bash because events there would forever change the landscape of professional wrestling. What we got was a Bill Goldberg conversion from fan favorite to rulebreaker.

A conversion from Judaism to Catholicism would have been more interesting. Could you just see it? When was the last time you saw a Baptism on a wrestling card?

"Tony, he's got the wafer, he's got the wafer!"

"And The New Blood is drowning Ric Flair in holy water!"

That would've attracted my attention, just like Banks' column did. Just in case you missed it, Banks, a former WWF employee, suggested that the situation in WCW these days is similar to the WWF's situation in 1996, when WCW was way up and the WWF was way down. The situation changed in a hurry. Banks is suggesting that history will repeat itself. Well, we'll see. The history of wrestling over the past 16 years shows that the WWF has usually been up and WCW has usually been down. The years 1994 to 1998 were an aberration.

Banks wrote that morale is bad in WCW's offices and locker rooms. "Simply put, many are not dedicated to turning this thing around, and I'd bet a large percentage don't even watch our shows," he wrote, giving me new respect for WCW personnel. He listed six things the higher-ups in WCW must do to "turn this thing around." They were as follows:

1. Address The Locker Room Issues. Banks is concerned about me-first locker room politics. "Weed out the bad apples in the locker room and get rid of the troublemakers," Banks wrote.

2. Admit We're In A Rebuilding Process. That means developing younger talent, like the WWF did in the mid-1990s. "This company has pushed Hulk Hogan for so long that it seems like they don't know any other way," Banks wrote.

Well, I've been saying that for the last five years. The WWF didn't know any other way, either, after Hogan left in 1993. It took Vince McMahon about two or three years to figure everything out.

Prediction: WCW wouldn't be hurt at all if it sent Hogan and Flair packing.

Dave Rosenbaum has been wanting to send Hulk Hogan to the glue factory for years. When Rosenbaum read a column by Bill Banks on wcw.com, he rejoiced at Banks' unforgiving honesty in regard to Hogan and other WCW dilemmas.

3. Give Vince Russo The Time And Power He Needs. Wrote Banks: "As soon as Vince Russo, Ed Ferrara, Terry Taylor, and myself came to WCW last October, Turner slapped on creative handcuffs, and both wrestlers and office personnel have tried to undermine us."

Hmmmmmm ... if that means more name-calling, cursing, and sexually oriented storylines, perhaps Russo and company might need to realize that there's another federation that has already done that: the WWF. I don't think copying the WWF is the way to go. WCW needs to find its own way.

4. Turner Must Realize What Today's Audience Wants. Wrote Banks: "One of my main concerns with the Turner television organization is the focus they have on the older audience. Obviously, that's their decision, but the continued ratings slide each year tells me they may not be in tune with what the television audience of today wants."

I'm going to disagree with Banks on this one. Scan any WWF crowd and you'll see people of all ages. Scan any WCW crowd and you'll see people of the same ages. I'd be willing to bet the demographics of both federations are pretty similar. What the audience wants is to not be bored. WCW's audience problem is connected to all its other problems.

5. Restock The Office With Young And Hungry Employees. Banks knows a lot more about this than I do.

6. Build A Creative Department Within WCW. Wrote Banks: "My final suggestion is for WCW to build a department within the office that deals with creative design of posters, merchandise, pay-per-views, logos, Internet graphics, etc. The booking team of WCW can only do so much when it comes to making wrestlers into 'superstars.' This is what the WWF does effectively. Their creative department (which consists of somewhere around 25-30 people) takes a new superstar, gives him a name, a look, a logo, entrance music, and everything else he needs on television. Then it is up to the writers to take that new character and build a story around him."

Banks worked with Vince Russo in the WWF's creative department, and when Russo jumped to WCW, so did Banks. Their arrival was expected to help to resuscitate the struggling federation. Banks says they've been undermined.

I wasn't aware that WCW didn't have a creative department (although I should have guessed).

One of the problems WCW faces is that wrestling fans don't care if WCW is beating the WWF or if the WWF is beating WCW. As long as there's one good wrestling show to watch on Monday nights, they're fine. If WCW starts doing things right, the fans will come back over.

While not pleased that Banks took it upon himself to express himself in such a way, give WCW management credit for not firing him. That's a good indication that they at least recognize their shortcomings and do not want to get rid of someone who obviously still has a passion for his job and the business. □

win lose or draw

By Harry Burkett

IF YOU ASK anyone in pro wrestling what was responsible for the WWF's dramatic turnaround and eventual domination of the sport, you'll usually get a one-word answer: attitude. The WWF's phenomenal success has left other companies—inside and outside of wrestling—scrambling to figure out the ingredients of the "WWF Attitude" formula.

Critics insist the "WWF Attitude" marketing strategy consists of nothing more than violence, gutter language, and sexploitation. That was partly true at the beginning, but as time goes by, a fourth ingredient in the WWF's winning formula is becoming more obvious. That crucial fourth ingredient is humor.

Wrestling has always had humor, but I'm not talking about those lame wrestler vs. bear matches in the 1970s or that awful pie-in-the-face humor that typified the WWF's *Tuesday Night Titans* show in the 1980s.

I'm talking about wit. According to *Webster's Dictionary*, wit is a type of humor that displays a keen power of perception or is an "expression of associations between ideas and words not usually connected, such as to produce an amusing surprise."

Here's an example. For several months, the WWF—and *PWI* for that matter—referred to the group of Triple-H, DeGeneration X, and the McMahon family as the McMahon-Helmsley Regime. Then Vince McMahon began referring to the group as the McMahon-Helmsley Faction. To me, regime is more accurate than faction because it implies the McMahons and Helmsley are running the federation rather than just forming another group within it. Jim Ross must have thought so, too, because he kept calling them the McMahon-Helmsley Regime. Keep in mind it took Ross several months to stop calling them the McMahon-Helmsley Error.

Anyway, Ross finally got it right and started calling them the McMahon-Helmsley Faction. This entire regime/faction controversy must have left Edge and Christian totally confused. To make sure he got it right (and to prove he's an absolute smart-aleck), Edge referred to them as the McMahon-Helmsley Fagime. I apologize if my spelling borders on bad taste.

Shakespeare said, "Brevity is the soul of wit." The fact that Edge's four-word quip summarized what took me several paragraphs to explain is proof.

Kurt Angle as a character is a clever spoof. His all-American hero persona is a parody of the prototypical wrestling good guy. Once upon a time, a wrestler needed only wrap himself in the American flag, espouse moral values, and represent himself as a role model to the nation's youth. But because so many of those "heroes" have been tarnished in wrestling, no one takes them seriously anymore. It's sad, but it's true. The truth is Kurt Angle doesn't act much differently than Bob Backlund did 20

Triple-H, Stephanie McMahon-Helmsley, and Shane McMahon are three vital members of the McMahon-Helmsley Faction. Or is it the McMahon-Helmsley Regime? The McMahon-Helmsley Fagime? Does it even matter?

years ago. Because Angle is an Olympic gold medalist, he enjoys even more character depth.

Edge and Christian's six-second pose, Pat Patterson and Gerald Brisco using Hulk Hogan's "Real American" theme, and Jerry Lawler mispronouncing the word "archival" as "archivial" (as Vince McMahon did in an earlier segment), are examples of witty, clever humor.

Much of this humor appeals to people on different levels. New fans who don't remember Hogan using the "Real American" theme will still appreciate it because it's a silly theme that doesn't fit those two. New fans laugh at Edge and Christian at the announcers' table as they admit they're planning a "run-in" (jumping inside the ring to affect the outcome), but long-time fans will enjoy the joke even more because the run-in is the most cliched match ending there is.

I enjoy the wit of Angle, Edge, Christian, and today's other WWF superstars far more than I enjoyed Uncle Elmer's wedding or Adrian Adonis' "Flower Shop" segment. I was only in my teens back then, and it was still condescending.

Witty humor is more appealing than goofy humor because it assumes a certain knowledge level among the viewers. Obviously, the WWF assumes its audience is "hip to the business," has been watching long enough to realize what "fagime" means, and is intelligent enough to know the difference between "archival" and "archivial." You don't need to read *PWI* every month or surf the Internet every day to appreciate this kind of humor.

In its effort to duplicate the same kind of humor on its own broadcasts, WCW has missed the mark. Remember Brad Armstrong impersonating his brother, Road Dogg, as the obnoxious Buzzkill? Or Mike Jones as Vincent, Vince, or Shane? What about Kevin Nash's lame impersonations of Arn Anderson and Vince McMahon?

Sometimes WCW assumes too much insider knowledge on the part of the viewer. Bobby Heenan's dated references to Fred Astaire, Shirley Temple, and *The Gong Show* during his commentary often made him the subject of ridicule on the Internet, in newsletters, and even in *PWI*. Heenan made another such reference on a recent *Thunder*, to which Mike Tenay exclaimed: "Bobby, isn't that another dated reference?!" Unless you pay close attention to wrestling magazines, newsletters, and the Internet, you wouldn't have gotten the joke. It was another piece of "insightful" commentary that went over most viewers' heads.

The same is true with G.I. Bro. Even I, a wrestling journalist, forgot Booker T was known as G.I. Bro on the independent circuit before he achieved tag team success with his brother, Stevie Ray. So, when Booker appeared in his G.I. Bro gear a few months ago, I was as confused as anyone else. It's hard to figure out the punch line if you don't realize there's a joke.

Even though Kurt Angle is a former Olympian, his in-ring prowess does not overshadow his talents behind the microphone. Angle's comedy is some of the WWF's best ever.

Alas, we have another case of where the WWF "gets it" and WCW doesn't. Much of the credit goes to Chris Kreski, who replaced Vince Russo as creative director in the WWF. He is a former writer on *The Martin Short Show* and the co-author of several Hollywood autobiographies, including *Growing Up Brady* with Barry Williams. Besides being a good writer, Kreski is proving he's also an intelligent wrestling fan. Fortunately, Kreski realizes he isn't the only one. □

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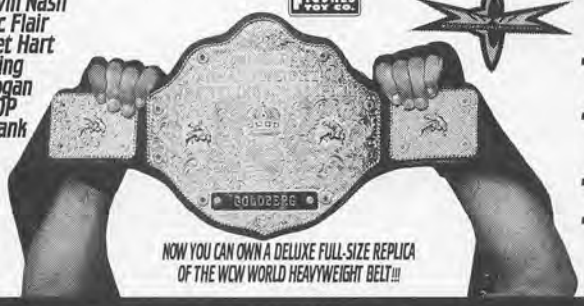

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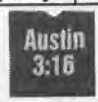

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Hulk Hogan (Pre-ring yellow/red outfit) ..... Macho Man Randy Savage #2
Sting (new black and pink outfit) ..... Booker T (from Harlem Beat)
Ric Flair (red tights) ..... Stevie Ray (from Harlem Beat)
Big Bubba Rogers (black pants and hat.) ..... The Giant (black tights)
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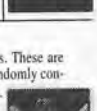

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UNITED STATES

ALABAMA

HAMMONDVILLE—Rampage Wrestling at the National Guard Armory: **Don Lirette** beat **Jaggar** ... **Tully Summers** beat **Timmy Cool** ... **Bob Wyre** defeated **Shawn Bagwell** ... **Demonmaster** beat U.S. champion **Todd Zane** by disqualification ... Heavyweight champion **Monster Man** beat **Adam Roberts**.
(06-23-00)

—Orlando Pickens

WETUMPKA—Alabama Championship Wrestling at the National Guard Armory: **Death Row** pinned **Eternity** ... **The Blond Bomber** defeated **Serial Clown** ... **Ogre** wrestled **El Satanico** to a no-contest ... **Joey Blade** & **Dixe Dynamite** defeated **Billy Welch** & **El Vertigo** ... **El Satanico** & **Merlyn** wrestled **Ogre** & **Krazee K** to a draw ... **J.T.** beat **Tony Spade**.
(06-17-00)

—Joe Slaten

CHATOM—Unified Championship Wrestling at the National Guard Armory: **Dan Delicious** defeated **John Tower** ... **Frank Smith** beat **Raine Quapone** ... **The Fifth Ward Posse** beat **Tommy Martinelli** & **Minotaur** ... Heavyweight champion **Al Savage** won a four-corners match against **Joe Kane**, **Tony Sweatt**, and **Echmo** ... **Bob Armstrong** & **Chad Cheetum** beat **Steve Southern** & **Marcell Pringle**.
(06-10-00)

—John Greene

CALIFORNIA

LOS ANGELES—Xtreme Pro Wrestling at the L.A. Sports Arena: **Pogo the Clown** wrestled **Carlito Montana** to a no-contest ... **Tracey Smothers** beat **Nosawa** ... **Halloween** & **Damien 666** defeated **The Westsiders** ... **Steve Rizzono** pinned **Kid Kaos** ... **Johnny Webb** defeated **Homeless Jimmy** ... **Tool** defeated **Kronus** ... **The Messiah** defeated **Supreme** ... Heavyweight champ **Sabu** wrestled **Abdullah the Butcher** to a no-contest.
(06-17-00)

—Nick Olivero

COLORADO

BERTHOUD—BCW Rampage at the BCW Arena: **Criminal** & **Jayco** defeated **Bo** & **B.J. Jones** ... **Drill Sargent** & **Ron Sanders** defeated **Mike Wolf** & **Kevin Steele** ... **Pimp Master** & **Mr. Pleasure** defeated **Jonny Danger** & **Perry** and **Matt Manti** & **Rocky Mountain Kid** and **The Studs Club** in a four-way match ... **Matt** & **Jeff Mock** defeated **Halogen** & **Golem** ... **The Frat Brats** defeated **Bobby** & **Danny Fisher** ... **Maxx Lord** defeated **Monarch** in a submission match ... **Mike Hunt** defeated **Mike Wrench** ... **Abdula** & **Soul Assassin** defeated **Rob Dawg** & **Wolfman** ... **Bobby White** beat **Billy Kidd**, **Rocky Rockwell**, and **Scott Heet** in an elimination match ... **Blue Ranger** & **State Patrol** defeated **White Lightning 2** & **X-Rated** ... **J.T. Thunder** defeated **Big Hammonds** ... **Tommy Assault** and **Ricky Rideoff** wrestled to a double-disqualification.
(06-02-00)

—Mitch Engle

CONNECTICUT

DANBURY—ECW at the O'Neill Center: **H.C. Loc** beat **Da Baldies** ... **Chilly Willy** defeated **Tony Mamaluke** ... **Steve Corino** beat **Yoshihiro Tajiri** ... **Simon Diamond** defeated **Danny Doring** ... **C.W. Anderson** & **Bill Wiles** beat **Nova** & **Chris Chetti** ... **Kid Kash** defeated **Chris Hamrick** ... TV champ **Rhino** and **Rob Van Dam** fought to a no-contest.
(06-17-00)

—Todd Pachs

FLORIDA

MILTON—Unified Championship Wrestling at the Santa Rosa County Auditorium: **Frank Smith** beat **Scorpion** ... **John Tower** pinned **Dan Delicious** ... **Wild Thing** defeated **Raine Quapone** ... **Echmo** beat **Big Nasty** and **Tony Sweatt** in a three-way dance ... Heavyweight champion **Al Savage** defeated **Tommy Martinelli** in a strap match ... **Bob Armstrong** & **Chad Cheetum** beat **Steve Southern** & **Marcell Pringle**.
(06-17-00)

—Ken Grimes

JACKSONVILLE—Thunder Wrestling Federation at the Thunder Dome: **O'Callaghan** beat **Enrique Figgs** ... **Ashe Corvan** wrestled **Big Nasty** to a time-limit draw ... **Phantom** pinned TV champ **Johnnie Lee** to win the title ... **The Assassin** wrestled **Wade Daniels** to a double-countout ... **J.T. Storm** pinned heavyweight champ **C.B. Cane** to win the title ... U.S. champ **Dagon Briggs** pinned **Dr. Feelgood**.
(06-16-00)

—Jason Sandal

ST. PETERSBURG—IPW Hardcore Wrestling's Jeff Peterson benefit show at the VFW Post: **Mike Sullivan** & **Ron Niemi** beat **Buck Quartermain** & **Dave Anderson** ... Tag team champs **Anarchy Suicide Squad** beat **The Freak Foundation** ... **Jamie-san** won a three-way dance, beating **Jeremy Lopez** and light heavyweight champ **Jet Jaguar** to win the title .. **D. Nash** beat **Pat McGroin** ... **Inner Aggression** beat **The Chaotic Cult** ... **Jim Cain** defeated **D-Day** ... **O.D.D.** beat **Rick Thames** in a falls-count-anywhere match ... **Frankie Capone** won a three-way dance against **Mr. Peskin** and **Bug** ... **The York Brothers** defeated **Notorious D.O.G.** & **Mike Marcello** ... **Mike** & **Todd Shane** defeated **Drunk** & **Disorderly**.
(06-10-00)

—Ed Westerly

GEORGIA

ATLANTA—Starsouth Championship Wrestling Alliance at Club 20 Grand: **Silky Boom Boom** defeated **Brucila** to win the light heavyweight title ... **Officer Friendly** defeated **Scarecrow** ... **T.C. Carter** beat **Vic Violent** to win the Georgia heavyweight title ... **Loon A Tic** defeated **Hardbody Harrison** by disqualification ... **Scarecrow** defeated **Sweet Daddy** ... **Silky Boom Boom** & **Loon A Tick** defeated tag team champs **The Georgia Blonds** to win the title.
(06-20-00)

—John Johnson

NORCROSS—National Championship Wrestling/NWA Wildside at Meadowcreek High School: **Jason Ultima** & **Ron Studd** defeated **Marky Mark** & **White Trash** ... **Onyx** defeated **Lazz** ... **Tonya Terrific** defeated **Lady Venus** ... **Rick Michaels** defeated **Terry Knight** by disqualification ... **Stone Mountain** and **Scotty Wrenn** battled to a no-contest.
(06-16-00)

—John Johnson

INDIANA

INDIANAPOLIS—Wild Championship Wrestling Outlaws at the Hawthorne Community Center: **Shiloh Hunter** defeated **Don Basher** by disqualification ... **The Soultaker** pinned **Wild Thing** ... **Indiana Kidd Jr.** defeated **Tarantula** ... **Cousin Otter** pinned **Lamar Erckle** ... **Angelfire** beat **The Black Widow** ... **Johnnie**

Walker pinned **Shiloh Hunter** ... Tag team champions **The Country Boys** defeated **Rob Ramer** & **Billy Bart** ... **Indiana Kidd Jr.** defeated **Don Basher** by disqualification in a steel chain match.
(06-02-00)

—Randy Klemme

KENTUCKY

CENTRAL CITY—Bad 2 the Bone Wrestling at the National Guard Armory: **Josh Garrett** defeated **Asmodeous** ... **Todd Morton** pinned **J.B. Thunder** ... **BioHazard** defeated **T.J. Lightnin'** ... **Alister Fear** pinned **The Regulator** to win the hardcore title ... **Bill Lewis** defeated **Manslaughter** to win the heavyweight title.
(06-17-00)

—Vince Kechlee

RUSSELLVILLE—Central Wrestling Federation at the Armory: **J.D. Thunder** beat **Steve Nealy** by disqualification ... **Richard Lowe** defeated **Chad Appling** ... **Terry England** & **Viper** pinned **The Nightstalker** in a handicap match ... **J.D. Thunder** & **Hitman Louie** beat **The Wild Boys** ... **Outback Jon** & **Vic the Bruiser** fought to a double-countout.
(06-10-00)

—Fred Gheat

MARYLAND

HOMEWOOD—American Wrestling Alliance at the High School: **El Sinistro** defeated **Omaha Kid** ... **Tank Murdoch** wrestled to time-limit draw with **Wolfe** ... **Dancer** & **Craize** beat **Grudge** & **Fury** ... Women's champion **Donna Reichman** defeated **Tamara Blake** ... **Bardak** defeated **Jeff Lowman** in a stretcher match ... Tag team champions **The Russian Mafia** beat **Robin Paige** & **Curt Verdenkin** ... **Baba Mustafa** beat **Spur** to win the heavyweight title.
(06-21-00)

—James Havron

BALTIMORE—WCW Great American Bash pay-per-view at the Baltimore Arena: Cruiserweight champion **Lt. Loco** beat **Disco Inferno** ... **Kronic** defeated **The Mamalukes** ... **Mike Awesome** beat **"Diamond" Dallas Page** in an ambulance match ... **G.I. Bro** defeated **Shawn Stasiak** in a boot camp match ... **Shane Douglas** beat **The Wall** in a tables match ... U.S. champ **Scott Steiner** defeated **Tank Abbott** & **Rick Steiner** in an asylum match ... **Hollywood Hogan** beat **Billy Kidman** to earn a World title shot at the Bash at the Beach pay-per-view ... **Ric Flair** defeated **David Flair** ... **Vampiro** beat **Sting** in a human torch match ... World champion **Jeff Jarrett** defeated **Kevin Nash**.
(06-11-00)

—Will Welsh

OCEAN DOWNS—Maryland Championship Wrestling at Bally's: **Orlando Jordan** pinned **Ronnie Zukko** ... Tag team champs **Joey Matthews** & **Christian York** beat **Jimmy Cicero** & **Chip Bowman** ... **Romeo Valentino** won a battle royal ... **Qeenan Creed** pinned **Marcus Jordan** ... **Fabulous Moolah, Mae Young,** & **Gillberg** beat **Platinum Nat** & **The Executioners** ... **2-Dope** & **Sydeswipe** beat **Christopher Carmichael** & **Dino Devine** ... Cruiserweight champ **Chad Bowman** beat **Adam Flash** ... Heavyweight champ **The Bruiser** beat **Ricky Blues** ... **George Steele** pinned **Romeo Valentino**.
(06-10-00)

—Jeff Amdur

MASSACHUSETTS

BOSTON—WWF King of the Ring pay-per-view at the Fleet Center: ***King of the Ring tournament, quarterfinal matches:*** **Rikishi Phatu** beat **Chris Benoit** by disqualification ... **Val Venis** defeated **Eddie Guerrero** ... **Crash Holly** beat **Bull Buchanan** ... **Kurt Angle** defeated **Chris Jericho** ... ***Non-tournament match:*** **Christian** & **Edge** beat World tag team champs **Too Cool, The Hardy Boyz,** and **Test** & **Albert** in a four-way match to win the title ... ***KOTR semifinal matches:*** Rikishi beat Venis ... Angle defeated Holly ... ***Non-tournament matches:*** **X-Pac, Road Dogg,** & **Tori** beat **The Dudley Boyz** in a table/dumpster handicap match ... Hardcore champion **Pat Patterson** and **Gerald Brisco** fought to a no-contest ... **Crash Holly** defeated **Pat Patterson** to win the title ... ***KOTR finals:*** Angle beat Rikishi ... **The Rock, Kane,** & **The Undertaker** defeated **Triple-H, Shane McMahon,** & **Vince McMahon**. Due to a pre-match stipulaton, **The Rock** became the new World champion via his winning pinfall over **Vince McMahon**.
(06-25-00)

—Dutch Krewda

MANSFIELD—South Coast Championship Wrestling at the Canoe River Campground: **Onix** defeated **Damian Houston** ... **Shane Simons** & **Frankie Armadillo** defeated **The Damned** ... **Stryker** defeated **Punisher** ... **Alex Payne** defeated **Don Juan de Santo** ... **Vertabreaker** won a three-way match against **Kid Krazy** and **Tavian Rave** ... **Tiny the Terrible** defeated **Little Killer** in a midget match ... **The Portuguese Sand Dragon** defeated **Gabriel** ... Heavyweight champ **Dr. Heresy** defeated **Trent McNealy** ... **Stryker** & **Hi-Lite Kid** defeated **Edward G. Xtasy** & **Punisher**.
(06-24-00)

—Carlos Arenas

SOMERVILLE—NWA New England at the Good Time Emporium: **Vince Vicallo** beat **Tiger Fang, Dan Bidondi,** and **Luis Ortiz** to win the junior heavyweight championship ... **Beau Douglas** defeated **Joel Davis** and **Kyle Storm** in a triangle match to win the TV title ... **Bull Montana** beat **Mr. Biggs** ... **Wagner Brown** & **Luis Ortiz** won a three-way match against **Nemesis** & **Scarecrow** and **The Millennium Killaz** to win the tag team title ... **Mike Johnson** beat **Trooper Gilmore** to win the brass knuckles title ... **Whacko** won a fatal four-way against **Brian Day, J. Kobain,** and **Wagner Brown** to win the vacant heavyweight title ... **Jason Rage** beat **The Dynamic Kidd** & **Zach Mason** in a handicap match.
(06-22-00)

—Rich Palladino

MINNESOTA

MINNEAPOLIS—WWF at the Target Center: Light heavyweight champion **Dean Malenko** beat **Crash Holly** ... **The Acolytes** defeated **Big Bossman** & **Bull Buchanan** ... **The Hardy Boyz** beat **Edge** & **Christian** ... European champion **Eddie Guerrero** defeated **Perry Saturn** ... **The Rock** & **The Dudley Boyz** beat **Triple-H, X-Pac,** & **Road Dogg** ... **D-Lo Brown** defeated **Midian** ... World tag team champions

(Continued on page 52)

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(Continued from page 51)

Too Cool beat **Test** & **Albert** ... Intercontinental champ **Chris Benoit** beat **Val Venis, Hardcore Holly,** and **Chris Jericho** in a four-way match ... **Rikishi Phatu** defeated **Kurt Angle.**
(06-17-00)

—Bobby Rittle

MISSOURI

COLUMBIA—WWF at the Heams Center: **The Godfather** defeated **D-Lo Brown** ... European champion **Eddie Guerrero** beat **Perry Saturn** ... **Road Dogg** & **X-Pac** beat **Buh Buh Ray** & **D-Von Dudley** ... Intercontinental champion **Chris Benoit** defeated **Al Snow, Bob Holly,** and **Chris Jericho** in a four-way match ... **Kane** defeated World heavyweight champion **Triple-H** by disqualification ... Light heavyweight champion **Dean Malenko** beat **Essa Rios** and **Sho Funaki** in a three-way match ... World tag team champions **Too Cool** defeated **Christian** & **Edge, The Hardy Boyz,** and **Test** & **Albert** in a four-way match ... **Rikishi Phatu** pinned **Kurt Angle.**
(06-11-00)

—Dominick Valenti

NEW JERSEY

WEST PATERSON—Independent Wrestling Federation at the IWF Center: **Hadrian** defeated **Tony Balboa** ... **H.P. Walker** & **Lil' Rage** defeated **Matt Yacano** & **Brian Segliman** ... **J.T. Blaze** defeated **J.J. Pervo** ... **B.J. Thomas** defeated **Scott Rooter** and **Mr. Mike Winner** in a handicap match ... **St. Patrick** defeated **Kasey** ... **Judas Young** defeated **Dr. Hurtz** by disqualification ... Heavyweight champion **Kevin Knight** won a fatal four-way match against **Biggie Biggs, Roman,** and **Brittany St. James.**
(06-25-00)

—Dorothy Sultana

WOODBURY—NWA-Jersey at the National Guard Armory: **Dave Misterio** wrestled **Breaker Moran** to a 10-minute draw ... **Lost Souls** wrestled **Touch of Reality** to a double-disqualification ... **Tommy Hawk** pinned **Ruckus** ... **Gino Caruso** defeated **The Evil Clown** ... **Kid Tiger** pinned **Clyde** ... **911** pinned **Manny Fernandez** ... **Derek Domino** pinned **Major Disaster.**
(06-17-00)

—Tyler Cates

PAULSBORO—New Millennium Wrestling at St. John's Parish Hall: **Don Rott** defeated **Izzy Gorgeous** ... **Robbie Marino** beat **Dewey Donovan** ... **The Southern Enforcer** beat **Tommy Bousche** by disqualification ... **Patty O'Brian** & **Dave Misterio** defeated **The Black Diamonds** ... **White Lotus** pinned **Vladimir Vampyre** ... **Trent Acid** beat **Ric Blade** ... **Patty O'Brian** & **Dave Misterio** defeated tag team champs **The Gentlemen's Club** for the belts ... **Patch** won a three-way match against **Gabriel Knight** and **Don Montoya.**
(06-09-00)

—Jack Garnett

BRICK—EWA at Memorial High School: **Vengeance** beat **Brian Sexton** ... **C.J. Summers** beat **Arcadia** ... **Mr. Motion** defeated **The Heartbreaker** ... **The Reckless Bullies** defeated **The Army of Pain** ... **Johnny X** won a battle royal ... **Matthew T. Storm** defeated **Vinnie Delicious** ... **Corrupted Youth** beat **Shock** and **Johnny X** in a three-way match to win the cruiserweight title ... **911** beat **Mark Handsome** & **Skitzo** ... Heavyweight champion **Tito Santana** beat **"Wacky" Wayne Woo.**
(06-02-00)

—Dominick Valenti

NORTH CAROLINA

ELKIN—AIWF at the Armory: **Luscious Kevin** beat **J.T. Sledge** ... TV champ **Creeping Death** won a four-way match against **Dr. Love, Midnight,** and **Major Havoc** ... Light heavyweight champ **Neal Leathers** won a three-way match against **Jumpin' Jimmy** and **Mitch Blake** ... **Jackie Anderson** beat **Major Havoc** in a bullrope match ... **The Tennessee Violence Authority** beat **Baine** & **Ash** ... **The Scorpion** beat **Steve Niles** in a human torch match.
(06-24-00)

—Dean Puckett

HIGH POINT—East Coast Pro Wrestling at the Armory: **Sgt. Maxx Rhoades, Alan Rage,** & **Redd** defeated **Super Assassin, Sniper,** & **James Reno** ... **Sage** defeated **Brad Hunter** ... **Mental Disorders** wrestled **Beauty** & **The Beast** to a double-countout ... **Tommy Steel** defeated **Marc Ash** ... U.S. champ **Tim Blaze** won a three-way dance against **The Lumbee Warrior** and **Brian Cobb** ... Tag team champs **Wendell Smooth** & **Razz** defeated **The Storm Brothers** ... Heavyweight champ **Jack Fulton** beat **The Barbarian** by disqualification.
(06-24-00)

—Marcus Watkins

MOREHEAD CITY—Southern Championship Wrestling at the National Guard Armory: **William Wealth** beat **Jacey North** ... **Lazuras** beat **Stratus** ... **Q-Sic** & **Too Damn Badd** beat **Mervin Snead** & **Dewey Cheatum** ... **Echo** beat **Lo-Ki** ... **Preston Quinn** won a three-way match against **Major DeBeers** and **Juice** ... **Kross** beat **Natrone Steele** ... **Scab** beat heavyweight champion **Cham Pain** to win the title.
(06-24-00)

—Greg Mosorjak

FOREST CITY—Eastern Wrestling Federation at the National Guard Armory: **Brian Fury** beat **Saki Liger** ... **Josh Steinborn** defeated **Krank** by disqualification ... **Necro** wrestled to a double-disqualification with **Psycho** ... **Axel Knight** beat **Hunter Thompson** ... **Bill Mud** beat **Randy Sledge** by disqualification ... **A.J. Frost** beat **Rough Rider** and **Ace Cauldrone** in a three-way elimination match.
(06-17-00)

—Dan Parris

ROXBORO—Piedmont Championship Wrestling at the Armory: **David Lee Gilbert** beat **Triple-X** ... **John Thundercloud** beat **Tre-G** ... **Joe Storm, Rob McBride,** & **Tim Blaze** beat **Carolina Kidd, David Blanchard,** & **Chuck King** ... **Rob McBride** won a battle royal ... ***In a tournament to declare a heavyweight champion, semifinal matches:*** **Stratus** beat **Krash** ... **Marc Ash** beat **Carolina Kidd** ... ***Finals:*** Stratus beat Ash to become the first PCW champion.
(06-17-00)

—Marcus Watkins

OHIO

HAMILTON—Heartland Wrestling Association at the Armory: **Matt Stryker** & **Benny Da Bookie** beat **Astin Augustus Ambrose, Esq.** & **J.J. Duquesne** ... **B.J. Whitmer** defeated **Logan Caine** ... **Tim Moxley** pinned **Benny Da Bookie** ... **The Xtremist** beat **Rory Fox** in a falls-count-anywhere match ... **Brian Fury** & **Bobby Casanova** beat tag team champs **Mad Anthony McMurphy** & **Cody Hawk** to win the belts ... Heavyweight champion **Race Steele** pinned **The Xtremist** ... **Chip Fairway** defeated **Shark Boy** in a lumberjack match.
(06-17-00)

—Dominick Valenti

OKLAHOMA

TULSA—Superstars of Wrestling at the Tulsa Fairgrounds Armory: **Tom Jones** & **Big Daddy Moore** defeated **New Genesis** ... **Heather Savage** beat **Venom** ... **Bull Schmitt** defeated **Stud Lee** ... **One Man Gang** beat **Luscious Larry** ... **Jimmy Snuka** defeated **Shawn Summers** ... **Dark Angel** beat **Slash** ... **Doug the Thug** defeated **Rick Garret** ... **Rocco Valentino** beat **Brian Cruize** ... **Jake Roberts** defeated **The Honky Tonk Man.**
(06-03-00)

—Walter L. Beril

PENNSYLVANIA

HAMBURG—Pennsylvania Championship Wrestling's "Blue Mountain Brawl" at the Field House: **Boogie Woogie Brown** & **Buck Wylde** defeated **Johnny Royal** & **Bruiser Graham** ... **"Doomsday" Danny Rose** pinned **Alex Arion** ... **John Balsamo** beat **Ryan Harman** ... **Scott Furie, Benny Stolzfus,** & **Johnny Maxx** beat **Mr. Ooh La La, Mozart Fontaine,** & **The Japanese Assassin** ... Americas champion **Brian Logan** defeated **Bob Evans** ... **Jimmy Valiant** beat **Eddie Valentine** ... Tag team champions **Vincent Goodnite** & **J.J. Johnson** beat **Frank Parker** & **Roger Anderson** and **Christian York** & **Joey Matthews** ... **Cheetah Master** & **Paul Turner** beat **Ty Street** & **Larry Peace.**
(06-17-00)

—Timothy A. Walker

PALO ALTO—Future Wrestling Alliance at Citizens' Fire Company: **Saboth** & **Jake Daniels** defeated **The Cremator** & **D.Z. Gillespie** ... **Reckless Youth** pinned **Nick Burke** ... **High Voltage** wrestled **Marshall Law** to a double-countout ... **Mafia** beat **Lo-Ki** ... **Monsta Mack** beat **Don Montoya** by disqualification ... **Dino Devine** & **Colleen** defeated **Ronnie Zukko** & **Candie** in a mixed tag team match ... **Danny Rose** & **Adam Flash** beat **Mark Shrader** & **Reckless Youth** and FWA tag team champions **Tommy Idol** & **Qeenan Creed** to win the belts ... **Mike Quackenbush** pinned **Dan Moreland.**
(06-03-00)

—Timothy A. Walker

YORK—Mid-Eastern Wrestling Federation at the

York County Vo-Tech School: **Ruckus** pinned **The Natural** ... **Mukie** beat **Wolfman** ... Mid-Atlantic champion **Buzz Striker** defeated **Tommy Hawk** ... **George Steele** pinned **King Kaluha** ... **Morgus the Maniac** pinned **Otto Sthark** ... **The Patriot** pinned **Tokyo Terror II** ... Heavyweight champion **Lucifer** defeated **Tokyo Terror I** ... **The Headshrinkers** defeated **Romeo Valentino** & **Dino Casanova.**
(06-02-00)

—Michael Reid

SOUTH CAROLINA

ORANGEBURG—Edisto Pro Wrestling at the Sports Complex: **The Red Dragon** beat **Eric Gibson** ... **Bubba Kirk** beat **Red Dog** ... **Steve Stasiak** fought **Jon Thor** to a no-contest ... **Uptown Larry D** beat **J.J. Jackson** ... **Desiree Peterson** beat **Traci Richards** ... **Lumberjack Lanny** fought **J.D. Justice** to a double-countout.
(06-10-00)

—Dan Parris

TENNESSEE

SHADY VALLEY—Appalachian Mountain Wrestling at the Elementary School: **Jesse Taylor** beat **Mike Hanson** by disqualification ... **Ricky Harrison** pinned **Bryan Wayne** ... **The Tennessee Hillbillies** defeated **The Scorpions** ... **Jesse Taylor** & **Chris Bumps** defeated **Mike Hanson** & **Mark Armstrong** ... **Chris Bumps** won a battle royal.
(06-24-00)

—Brian Smith

CHATTANOOGA—WWF at McKenzie Arena: **Essa Rios** defeated **Stevie Richards** ... European champion **Eddie Guerrero** beat **Perry Saturn** ... **Road Dogg** & **X-Pac** beat **Buh Buh Ray** & **D-Von Dudley** ... **Ivory** pinned **Jacquelyn** ... **Rikishi Phatu** beat World champion **Triple-H** by disqualification ... **D-Lo Brown** beat **Joey Abs** ... **Kaientai** defeated **Pete Gas** & **Rodney** ... World tag team champions **Too Cool** defeated **Test** & **Albert.**
(06-18-00)

—Dominick Valenti

MEMPHIS—Power Pro Wrestling TV taping at the WMC-TV studios: Heavyweight champion **Wolfie D** defeated TV champ **Blade Boudreaux** ... **Derrick King** defeated **Alan Steele** ... **Koko B. Ware** defeated **The Aristocrat** ... **Spellbinder** defeated **Seven.**
(06-17-00)

—Sheryl Dunn

TEXAS

PLANO—Texas Championship Wrestling at the Slam Shack: **Kevin Dark** beat **Crybaby Flame** ... TV champion **Nature Boy Blair** pinned **Cyclone** ... **Tommy Nero, Amazing Mike,** & **Hawkeye** defeated **Commish Lewis, Sean Reagan,** & **Sledge Johnson** ... **Big Clyde** defeated **Bullet** and **Ninja** in a three-way match ... **Hell Kid** beat **Phat Samoan** in a thumbtack match to capture the hardcore title ... **Beast** beat **Chris Chronic** in a steel cage match to capture the heavyweight title.
(06-05-00)

—Tom Caiazzo

VIRGINIA

ASHLAND—Virginia Wrestling Federation at the VFW Arena: **Kid Canada** beat **Frankie Savage** to win the light heavyweight title ... **Roy L. Pain** beat **Al Catraz** ... **Kylie McLean** and **Lady Scorpion** co-won a ladies battle royal ... **Confederate Warrior** defeated **Dr. Studd** ... **Kylie McLean** defeated **Lady Scorpion** for the vacant ladies title ... **Jimmy Bondage** and **The Mercenary of Mayhem** wrestled to a no-contest ... **The Russian Mafia** beat **The Young Guns** ... **Hot Property** defeated **Latin Lover.**
(06-24-00)

—Kyle Leach

COEBURN—Southern States Wrestling at the Lonesome Pine Raceway: **Eddie Bruiser, G-Dog,** & **Seth Little** beat **Death Row 2000** ... **Homicide** pinned **Crazy Ivan** ... **Chuck Jones** won a three-way match against **Pork Chop Cash** and **Mike Cooper** ... **Ron Ray** defeated **Bryan Wayne** ... **Beau James** & **K.C. Thunder** beat **Iron Cross** & **Manny Fernandez** ... **War Machine** pinned **Tracey Smothers.**
(06-16-00)

—Mike DiMuzio

HENDERSON—North American Wrestling Alliance at the National Guard Armory: **Sgt. Sharkey** beat **Painmaster** ... **Dr. Cool** & **J.R.** beat **The Young Guns** ... **Stratus** beat **Dave Blanchard** ... U.S. champion **Dorty Reid** beat **Bob Ozark** ... **Icecold** & **The Young Lion** beat **Gino Blanchard** & **Rip Manson** ... **Mr. Breeze** beat **The Punk** ... Heavyweight champion **The Intimidator** beat **Gino Blanchard** ... **Rustee Thomas** defeated **Lady Scorpion** ... **Demolition Ax** beat **Shane Hooker** ... Tag team champions **John Stone** & **The Big E** and **The Ebony Express** wrestled to a double-countout.
(06-03-00)

—C. Shane Cochran

WASHINGTON

TACOMA—Pacific Wrestling Federation at the Temple Theater: **Awesome Adam** defeated **The Punk Rock Prod** ... **The Apostle** won a battle royal ... **Tank** beat **Tra Dogg** ... **Sonny O'Mara** beat **Blaze Dailey** ... **Ken Reilly** defeated **Bryan Alvarez** ... **Mr. Sexy** defeated **Nikki Six** ... **Richie Magnet** & **Buddy Wayne** defeated **Avalanche** & **Chef** and **Da Clownz** in a three-way match ... **Combat Girl** beat **Fender Gibson** in a "loser-must-wear-makeup-and-a-dress" match ... **Chris Del Sol** beat **Mr. GQ** in a ladder match ... **Tim Flowers** won the heavyweight title by winning a six-way hardcore match.
(06-02-00)

—Dominick Valenti

WEST VIRGINIA

STONEWOOD—Mason Dixon Wrestling at the Stonewood Fire Hall: **Thrillbilly Ox** won a battle royal ... **Mason Hunter** wrestled **Chick Scott** to a no-contest ... **Scotty McKeever** beat **Thrillbilly Jed** by disqualification ... **The Nomad** beat **Johnny Blast** ... **Daron Smythe** beat **Masked Assassin I** by reverse decision ... **Blondie McFarlin** beat **The Southern Brawler** ... **Puck** wrestled **J.T. Martin** to a draw.
(06-14-00)

—Mark Mills

PLYMOUTH—Appalachian Wrestling Alliance at the Community Center: **Tank Murdoch** defeated **The Omaha Kid** ... **El Sinistro** defeated **Wolfe** for the cruiserweight title ... **Robin Paige** & **Curt Verdenkin** beat **Dancer** & **Craze** ... **Jeff Loweman** beat **Bardak** ... **Donna Reichman** defeated **Tamara Blake** for the ladies title ... Tag team champions **The Russian Mafia** beat **Grudge** & **Fury** ... **Spur** beat **Baba Mustafa** for the heavyweight title.
(06-03-00)

—James Havron

INTERNATIONAL

AUSTRALIA

PARRAMATTA—Titan Wrestling Promotions at the RSL Club: **Striker** defeated **Fabio the Fabulous** ... **Aml Action** defeated **Roya** ... Heavyweight champion **Dean Draven** and **The Chief** wrestled to a no-contest ... **Jumpin' Josh** defeated **The Nightcrawler.**
(06-10-00)

—Philip Granger

CANADA

CLOVERDALE, BRITISH COLUMBA—International Championship Wrestling at the Cloverdale Fairgrounds: **Sabastian Shaw** beat **Butch Pain** ... **Apostle** won a rookie battle royal ... **Mike Malaka** defeated **Jamie Flame** ... **Jake Evans** beat **Tiger Redding** and **Vincent Hall** in a three-way match ... **Blaze Daily** defeated **Sonny Omara** ... **Punk Rock Prod** beat **Scotty Braden** ... **Tank** beat **Tra Dogg** ... **Heckles Da Clown** defeated **Shooter** ... **The Chef** & **Avalanche** and **Buddy Wayne** & **Richie Magnett** wrestled to a double-pin ... **Bryan Alvarez** beat **Ken Riley** ... **Mr. Sexy** defeated **Nikkie Sixx** ... **Combat Girl** beat **Fender Gibson** in a make-up match ... **Mr. GQ** defeated **Chris Del Sol** in a ladder match ... **Tim Flowers** won a six-man elimination match, last eliminating **Urban Outlaw.**
(06-03-00)

—Neil O'Brien & Dominick Valenti

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY
DECEMBER

CALIFORNIA

LOS ANGELES—NWA at the Olympic Auditorium: **Massa Saito** beat **Suni War Cloud** ... **Earl Maynard** defeated **Francisco Flores** ... **La Pantera Negra** beat **Bull Ramos** ... **Goliath** and **Sal Lothario** wrestled to a draw ... **John Tolos** beat **Kenji Shibuya** ... **Cowboy Laine** defeated Pacific Coast champion **Fidel Castillo** for the title ... Americas champion **Black Gordman** beat **Mil Mascaras.**
(12-04-71)

—PWI archives

NEW JERSEY

EAST RUTHERFORD—WWF at the Meadowlands Arena: World tag team champs **Mr. Fuji** & **Mr. Saito** beat **Tony Atlas** & **S.D. Jones** ... **Rick Martel** defeated **Masked Executioner** ... **Johnny Rodz** beat **Curt Hennig** ... **Greg Valentine** defeated **Tony Garea** ... **Ivan Putski** beat **King Kong Mosca** ... **Andre the Giant** defeated **Killer Khan** ... Intercontinental champion **Pedro Morales** beat **Magnificant Muraco** ... **Jesse Ventura** defeated World champion **Bob Backlund** by disqualification.
(12-13-81)

—PWI archives

NEW YORK

NEW YORK—WWWF at Madison Square Garden: **Steve Stanlee** pinned **Kenny Ackles** ... **Luke Graham** and **Don McClarity** fought to a draw ... **Bill Watts** defeated **Golden Terror** ... **Waldo Von Erich** & **Smasher Sloan** beat **Miguel Perez** & **Pedro Morales** ... **Jerry** & **Eddie Graham** defeated **Bobo Brazil** & **Jim Hady** ... **Haystacks Calhoun** beat **Gorilla Monsoon** by disqualification ... World champion **Bruno Sammartino** defeated **Gene Kiniski.**
(12-14-64)

—PWI archives

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ringside

(Continued from page 9)

ment companies. The plan is for *Raw*, *Superstars*, and *Live Wire* to be carried on a revamped TNN. *Sunday Night Heat* will join **Carson Daly**, **Britney Spears**, **Eminem**, and **Limp Bizqit** on MTV. And *Smackdown* will remain on Viacom-owned UPN.

"**Vince** and **Linda McMahon** and the WWF team have created one of the most valuable franchises in television. Their brand of entertainment is unique and will be a perfect fit for TNN, which we are repositioning as a top-10 destination for viewers," said **Brian Hughes**, TNN's vice president of programming. "WWF will serve as an excellent platform to jump-start TNN's growth and make TNN a 'must-have' among viewers, advertisers, and cable operators."

The Blue Meanie and his alluring girlfriend, Jasmine St. Claire, have turned up in ECW. At a svelte 250 pounds, the Meanie, who is now wrestling as The Blue Boy, has never looked better.

Where does this leave ECW, you ask? Right now, out in the cold. TNN notified the promotion that the last episode of *ECW On TNN* would air on September 22. As of press time, ECW was rumored to be in talks with both USA Networks and Fox, but no deal (or deals) had been reached.

Tickets for WrestleMania XVII, to be held in Houston, Texas, at the Astrodome on April 1, 2001, will go on sale November 11 ... **Ric Flair** and **Konnan** both had surgery recently. Konnan should be back shortly after this issue of *PWI* hits the newsstands, but Flair will be out longer. Don't look for the "Nature Boy" to be participating in any in-ring action for about six months ... In other WCW injury news, **Johnny the Bull** suffered a very serious injury during his *Nitro* hardcore match with **Terry Funk** in July. Johnny landed hard on an over-the-top-rope legdrop and broke a bone at the end of his pelvis. There has been no official word as to when Johnny will return to the ring, but it is expected that his injury will keep him out a long while ... By the time this magazine hits the newsstands, **Raven** should have already joined the WWF ... **The Blue Meanie** has returned to ECW, along with his girlfriend, the lovely and talented **Jasmine St. Claire**. The slimmed-down Meanie is now know as **The Blue Boy** and is being managed by **Lou E. Dangerously**.

That's it for me this month, fans. Enjoy your wanderings. ☐

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WEAR-DOWN HOLDS

1. Airplane spin
2. Armbar
3. Armdrag
4. Armlock
5. Arm stretch
6. Arm whip
7. Asian spike
8. Bear hug
9. Biting
10. Body slam
11. Body tackle
12. Chicken wing
13. Choke
14. Claw
15. Clothesline
16. Cross body block
17. Double axehandle
18. Drop kick
19. Eagle split
20. Elbow smash
21. Eye gouge
22. Face rake
23. Fireman's carry ram
24. Flying body press
25. Flying clothesline
26. Flying drop kick
27. Flying elbow drop
28. Flying head butt
29. Flying mare
30. Forearm smash
31. Foreign object
32. Full nelson
33. Giant swing
34. Grapevine
35. Hair pulling
36. Hammerlock
37. Head lock
38. Head stomp
39. Heart punch
40. Hip roll
41. Irish whip
42. Knee drop
43. Leglock
44. Manager interference
45. Monkey flip
46. Overhead toss
47. Pole ram
48. Reverse chinlock
49. Rolling scissors
50. Rope burn
51. Savate kick
52. Scissors grip
53. Shoulder breaker
54. Slingshot
55. Snap mare
56. Step-over toe hold
57. Suplex
58. Surfboard
59. Turnbuckle smash
60. Wristlock

SET-UP HOLDS

61. Abdominal stretch
62. Atomic drop
63. Avalanche
64. Backbreaker
65. Backroll press
66. Belly to belly
67. Big splash
68. Boston crab
69. Brain buster
70. Bulldog
71. Camel clutch
72. Cobra clutch
73. Cradle
74. Crucifix
75. DDT
76. Figure four
77. Flying leg drop
78. Gourd buster
79. Indian death lock
80. Neckbreaker
81. Piledriver
82. Power bomb
83. Power slam
84. Russian sickle
85. Sleeper
86. Slingshot suplex
87. Small package
88. Spine buster
89. Sunset flip
90. Superplex

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☐ *1. Big Ben*

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WRESTLER'S NAME (DO NOT USE ANY REAL PRO WRESTLER NAMES)

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1_____ 2_____ 3_____ 4_____ 5_____

6_____ 7_____ 8_____ 9_____ 10_____

Set-Up Holds: Choose 5 of the holds at the left numbered 61-90. Only use a hold once.

1_____ 2_____ 3_____ 4_____ 5_____

Finishing Hold: Create your own custom final maneuver or choose a hold from our list.

_____

Opponents: Check the box below each wrestler you wish to challenge.

(Continued from page 21)

the company fans, money, and momentum. Hurt by rumors of bankruptcy and constant outrage from fans due to outlandish storylines, FMW has quickly reached its lowest point in recent history. Some would argue that any publicity is good publicity, but the traditionally minded and often-conservative Japanese fan can't help but be turned off when FMW makes headlines for allowing its wrestlers to urinate on the company president in mid-ring. The idea that there is no such thing as bad publicity is clearly an American one.

As for All-Japan, a rough ride is ahead. Left with Toshiaki Kawada, a handful of mid-carders, and some American talent after Misawa broke away from owner Motoko Baba (Giant Baba's widow) and convinced most of the wrestlers to leave with him, its roster has been cut by some 80 percent. It has lost a regular spot on television, and interest in AJPW arena shows isn't exactly skyrocketing in the wake of Misawa's departure. Even the 11th hour return of former star Genichiro Tenryu (his surprise defection from New Japan prompted many fans at an All-Japan show to break down and cry) has only helped so much.

Unfortunately, All-Japan is now facing a lot of the same problems as FMW. Danger of financial collapse and growing fan disinterest in the company's shows have pushed All-Japan further away from New Japan, and Misawa's fledgling NOAH group has already become the number-two promotion in the Orient—this before even running a single show.

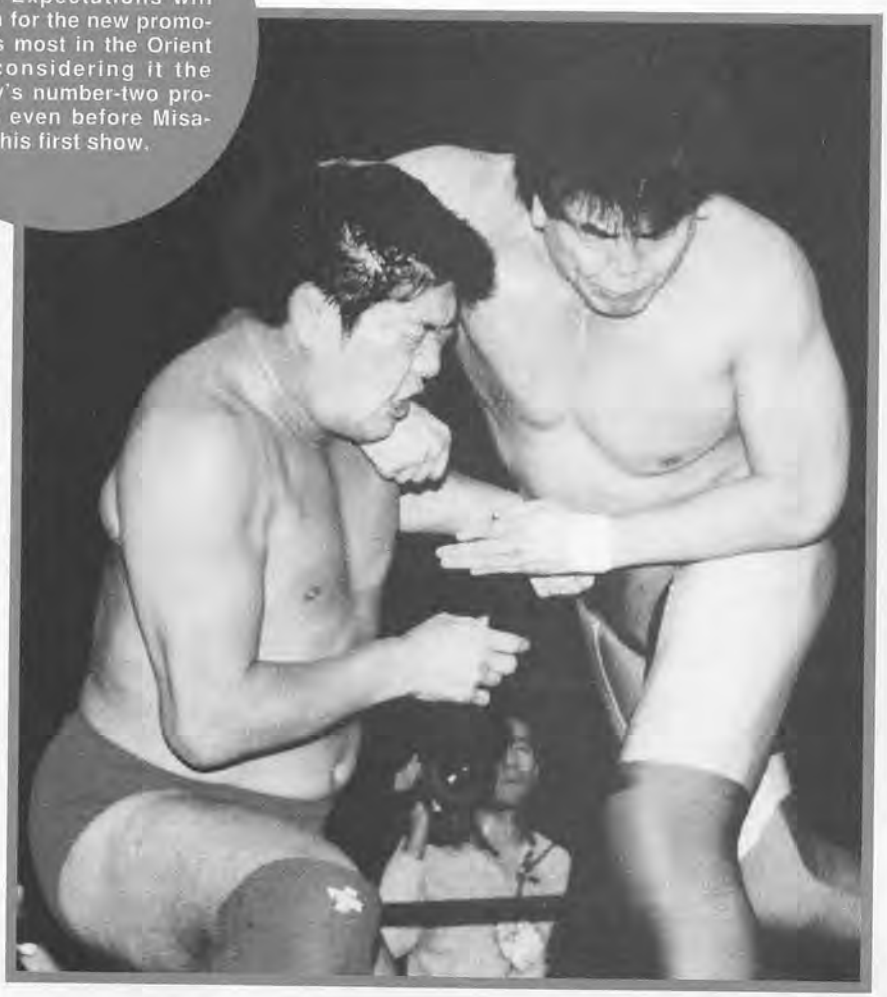
With almost the entire All-Japan roster joining him, Misawa has the world's attention going into the first NOAH show. Will he have the staying power to remain a major player in Japan for years to come?

Well, his company certainly has the star power. Just Misawa and Kenta Kobashi alone could probably pack a small arena. Any other group would have to start at the bottom of the *puroresu* ladder, but Misawa's new organization has the ability to start out close to the top. With a pledge to make NOAH as cutting edge as possible, NOAH could surpass even New Japan in time, finding a broader audience by infusing established stars with fresh ideas and concepts.

That, of course, is what promoters all over the world are always trying to do.

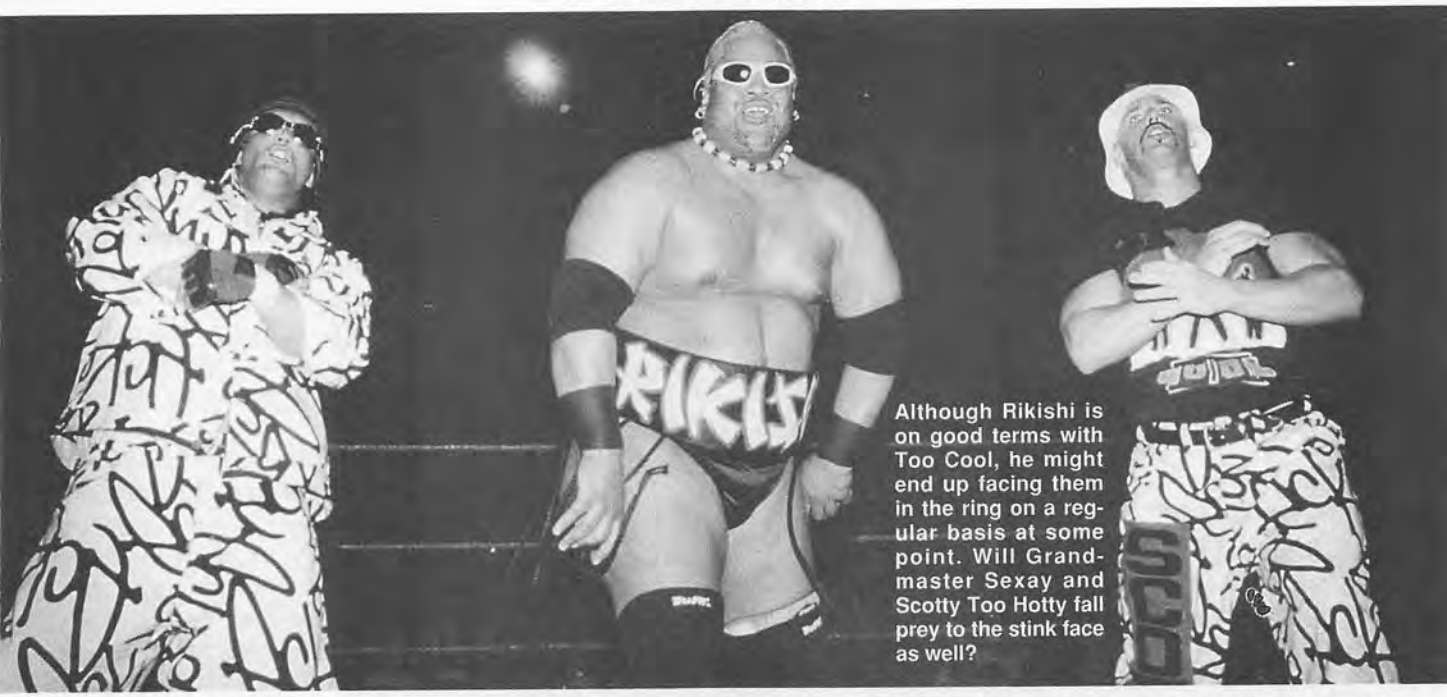
No, in case you were wondering, you can't say Sasaki or Misawa is the Japanese Rock. It's not a fair comparison or an accurate one.

But you *can* say that keeping track of the landscape of the Japanese wrestling scene is no easier than figuring out things in America. And it won't get any easier in the future. □



The Misawa-Kenta Kobashi rivalry will now continue in NOAH. Expectations will be high for the new promotion, as most in the Orient were considering it the country's number-two promotion even before Misawa ran his first show.

(Continued from page 34)



Although Rikishi is on good terms with Too Cool, he might end up facing them in the ring on a regular basis at some point. Will Grandmaster Sexay and Scotty Too Hotty fall prey to the stink face as well?

ever been stink-faced has ended up in the WWF offices demanding a rematch as soon as possible."

Rikishi knows just how humiliating and effective his stink face can be. Val Venis, for example, wanted revenge on Rikishi for stink-facing Trish Stratus. At King of the Ring, Venis was so focused on revenge, he lost focus on the match, and Rikishi advanced to the tournament finals (though he did beat Rikishi for the I-C strap nine days later).

Venis is just one of the many WWF superstars who have found themselves looking at the wrong set of Rikishi's cheeks. Venis, Stratus, Triple-H, Kurt Angle, Christian, Edge, Stephanie McMahon (nearly), Road Dogg, and Chris Benoit are just some of the notables on Rikishi's not-so-noteworthy stink list. By the time you read this, other names will have been added, and it's a safe bet these names will want a rematch, too.

It's also a good bet that some of Rikishi's victims will end up with titles in the near future. Even if Rikishi's popularity dies down somewhat, or if his momentum fades out, it won't take much prodding for any one of those guys to take a rematch against the man who embarrassed them by rubbing his sweaty butt in their faces. Therefore, as long as Rikishi keeps backing that ass up, he's not going to be far removed from the title picture.

It's not a long trip, but it sure ends with a bang. Rikishi's sitdown piledriver is a deadly weapon, but we're sure D-Lo Brown will rather endure this move than suffer a stink face.

In the meantime, he welcomes the perception of being a novelty.

"If someone wants to look at me and say he's nothing but a fat guy, that's fine by me," Rikishi said. "I'm not what you'd call a pushover. If you want to overlook the substance by concentrating on my ass or on my dancing, go right ahead. It'll be your mistake."

Benoit and Venis have already made that mistake, and everyone else carrying a grudge because of Phatu's rump-shaking are playing right into his hands. And as long as they do, Rikishi will continue to back that ass up. □

(Continued from page 23)

The 2000 King of the Ring uses one of his many suplex variations to stagger The Rock. Imagine the celebration the former Olympian would have if he were to beat The Rock for the WWF championship.

LENKER: ... ticked off that his wife is fooling around with the King of the Ring.

ANGLE: Excuse me ...

LENKER: Come on, it's obvious something's going on. Not only does Stephanie help you in your matches, but you two embrace like a pair of high school sweethearts every time you see each other.

ANGLE: For the record, and a king shouldn't have to go on record, let it be known that Stephanie and I share a totally professional relationship. I preach abstinence and practice it as well. Besides, I would never abuse my royal powers for that purpose. I'm a benevolent king. *(To himself) Hmmmmmm,* King Kurt the Benevolent ...

KREWDA: You didn't sound so benevolent when Mick Foley almost failed to include you in the triple threat number-one contenders match on *Raw.*

ANGLE: I was just fighting for what was mine. I went to King of the Ring and beat everyone I needed to beat. I won the tournament. I should have been the number-one contender. I gave up on the coronation, but I wasn't giving up my title match with The Rock. I didn't even get a coronation on *Raw.* Instead, Triple-H came out crying to Mick Foley that he didn't lose the title, that he deserves to be the number-one contender.

MURPHY: Actually, you did get coronated ... when Triple-H planted you with that pedigree in the main event.

ANGLE: Make jokes if you want, but that pedigree was just another example of what's lacking in the WWF: integrity. Triple-H attacked me before the match, and the McMahons interfered on Triple-H's behalf throughout the bout. I guess fighting all those people left me open for that move, but using outside help and surprise attacks is Triple-H's style. He has no integrity and even less intelligence, if you ask me.

KREWDA: Triple-H may not be the most honest man in the WWF, but I think he's very clever. He's managed to become the most dominant wrestler in the WWF in a very short amount of time.

ANGLE: But he won't be for long if continues to let Vince McMahon make his matches for him. I mean, why would Triple-H agree to those crazy stipulations at King of the Ring? Imagine, trusting the WWF title to two non-wrestlers like Vince and Shane McMahon—against The Rock, Kane, and The Undertaker, no less. Sorry, but that's not very intelligent.

LENKER: Let's talk about your final opponent at King of the Ring, Rikishi Phatu. You've been victimized by the stink face several times, but you managed to avoid it at the PPV, and you won the match.

ANGLE: Rikishi is a one trick pony. If you block the stink face, you have him beat. What I'd like to

Angle defeated Val Venis for the European championship, his first title in the WWF. Capturing the World belt is clearly his number-one goal right now.

know is why the fans go so crazy about him. I still haven't figured out what's so great about 450 pounds of lumpy Samoan backside. In fact, my first proclamation as King of the Ring just may be banning the stink face. That move is disgusting.

KREWDA: Kurt, it sounds like you plan on doing a lot as the 2000 King of the Ring, but realistically, what do you hope to get from the experience?

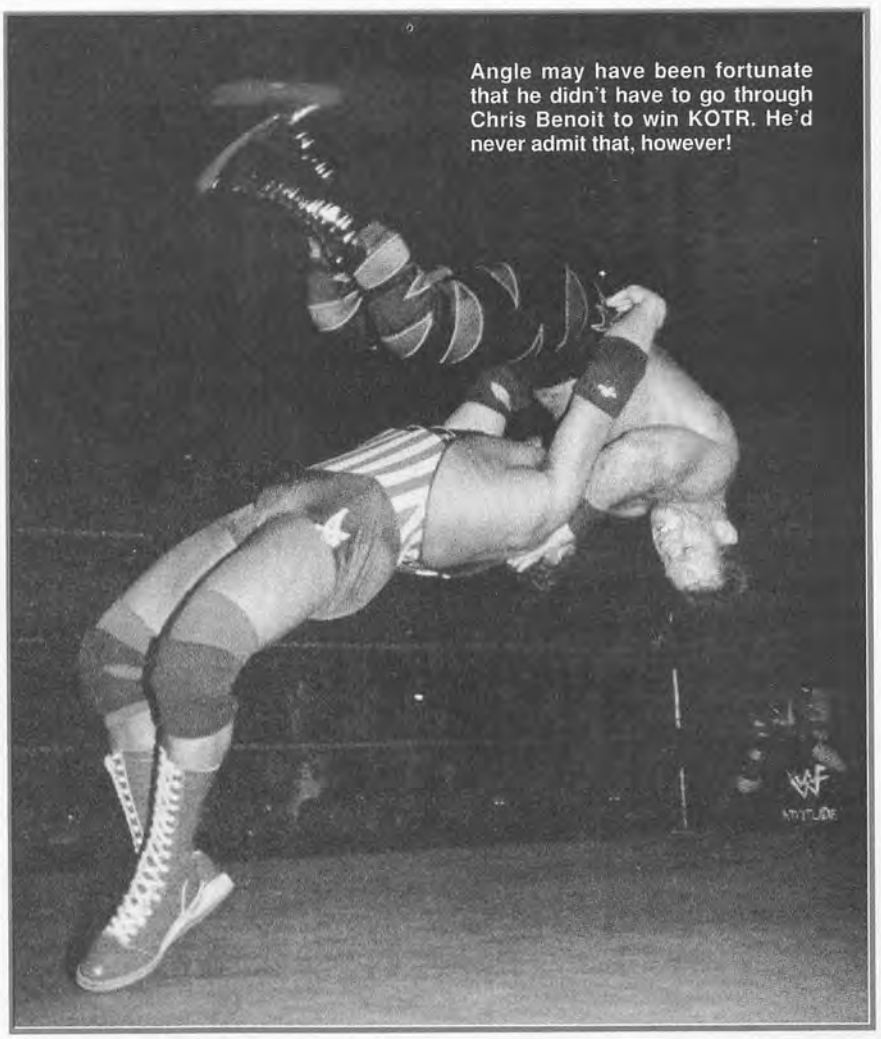
ANGLE: Before I answer that, let me just remind you guys of what a great honor it is to wear this crown. It's an honor just to be in the same select group with men like Bret Hart and Steve Austin. Of course, Mabel and Haku are also in that group. Some were great kings. Others were not so great. It's true. But I will go down as the greatest WWF King of the Ring of all-time. All WWF kings will be judged by the standard set by King Kurt the Benevolent.

LENKER: I think Frank meant on a day-to-day basis.

ANGLE: Oh ... well ... like I said, I'd like to get the stink face outlawed. I'd also use my tremendous power to ban the pedigree and the people's elbow. I think the WWF would be a much better place without them. Finally, I would issue a decree that calls for an immediate rematch in all title matches I fail to win. It's what royalty calls an executive privilege.

LENKER: Kurt, with all due respect, most wrestlers just get a push after winning King of the Ring, not a Congressional seat. I doubt you can make all that happen in one year.

ANGLE: That's where you're wrong, friend. Kurt Angle is more than just another WWF King of the Ring. No one, whether it's Bret Hart or Mabel, has ever ruled the WWF with as much integrity, intensity, and intelligence as King Kurt the Benevolent will—and that's true. □



Angle may have been fortunate that he didn't have to go through Chris Benoit to win KOTR. He'd never admit that, however!

time capsules

WHAT AN UPLIFTING EXPERIENCE!

Dick the Bruiser, who normally demonstrated his toughness by stomping his opponents through the mat, demonstrates his power here by giving this Hawaiian wrestling fan a one-armed lift—and he didn't even slam him to the ground!

"LET'S TAKE HIM TO THE DUDE RANCH"

Actually, after Blackjack Mulligan and Bugsy McGraw lassoed former Dynamite Dude Johnny Ace in this 1987 NWA match, they stuffed him in the trunk of McGraw's Cadillac and sped away. Ace recently returned to WCW as a matchmaker after a lengthy career in Japan.

"SAY IT, DON'T SPRAY IT, DOC"

In his quest to make his point quickly and enthusiastically, it looks like an agitated Steve Williams accidentally spit in the face of UWF announcer Jim Ross during this 1987 outburst. Their friendship survived this dishonor, but it became strained when Williams jumped from the WWF to WCW in 1999.

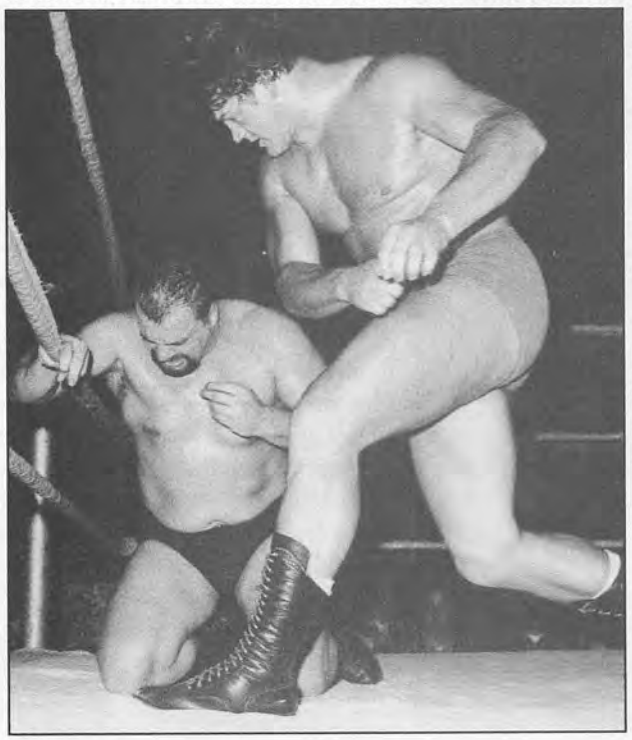
"THIS MARRIAGE IS KILLING ME"

Being married to a professional wrestler is never easy, but being married to Karl Kox must have been especially tough. "Killer" Karl was one of the most hated wrestlers in Texas and Georgia at one time, and judging from this 1964 photo, he couldn't have been too popular at home.

Take a look back through the rich history of our sport as PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED offers a sampling of the some of the most unique photos from the largest collection in the world!

"SAY CHEESE!"

Dick "Bulldog" Brower took time from beating on Joe Blanchard in this 1963 bout to flash a smile for our photographer. Unfortunately, Brower became less cooperative as his career progressed, and he eventually took to chasing our camera men from ringside.



FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

Krusher Khrushchev drew some concerned looks from fellow comrades Ivan and Nikita Koloff, who appeared worried about the condition of Khrushchev's right knee. In reality, the former NWA World tag team champions had little to worry about, as any combination of the three were permitted to defend the title back in 1985.

"THE KING" GETS CROWNED

Austin Idol coronates Jerry "The King" Lawler with Lawler's finishing maneuver of choice, the piledriver. With an Idol and a "King" wrestling in the same ring, it's a wonder there was enough space for the wrestlers *and* their swelled heads. The fact that Idol flattened him with his own maneuver must have bruised Lawler's ego just a bit.

"WHO'S 'THE MAN'?"

In this case, it certainly wasn't Stan Stasiak, who adopted the nickname when he arrived in the WWF. One of the few men who could match Stasiak's toughness was Don Leo Jonathan, who gained fame as perhaps the most versatile big man in wrestling history. These guys waged one of the most brutal wars in Canadian wrestling history.

the JAPAN REPORT

By Mike Spillane

NOT SINCE THE split between All-Japan and SWS more than a decade ago has anything rocked the *puroresu* landscape the way **Mitsuharu Misawa's** departure from All-Japan has. Misawa, the company's top star since 1993 and its acting president, stepped down from his post and declared that he was leaving the federation. In the wake of Misawa's departure, talks of a new wrestling promotion began to circulate.

With Misawa gone, others began to follow, including most of All-Japan's top performers. Triple Crown champion **Kenta Kobashi** vacated the titles and left the promotion. **Jun Akiyama**, the company's most promising young prospect, also left. So did **Akira Taue**, **Yoshinari Ogawa**, **Takao Omori**, and a host of others.

Almost three-quarters of the All-Japan roster has decided to join Misawa in his new promotion, NOAH, which was set to promote its first show in August. Of course, the mass exodus of talent left All-Japan Pro Wrestling in shambles. Heading the company now is the widow of **Giant Baba**, **Motoko Baba**. She will be aided by **Toshiaki Kawada**, the only headliner who remained loyal to the company. Kawada, **Masa Fuchi**, **Maunukea Mossman**, and all the American wrestlers who compete regularly for the company must now continue to tour, despite having a radically diminished lineup.

Initially, it seemed like this would be a blow from which All-Japan could not recover. Standing to lose its only television outlet, it appeared that All-Japan was on its last legs until an announcement came from Kawada regarding perennial rival New Japan Pro Wrestling. Shortly after the mass exodus, New Japan and what was left of All-Japan reached an agreement. The two would have a talent exchange in the coming months, essentially bringing together the country's two dominant promotions.

While the deal with New Japan is far from definite, just the open communication between the two has *puroresu* fans excited. For the first time, a match between Kawada and **Shinya Hashimoto** or **Masa Chono** is a realistic possibility. Bouts that were once only thought of as dream matches are now conceivable.

Some critics think that the All-Japan/New Japan working agreement will never actually come to be. One man who isn't waiting to find out is **Genichiro Tenryu**. A star with All-Japan years ago, Tenryu left the company to star in the now-defunct SWS and wound up in New Japan after that company folded. Tenryu's protege, Kawada, remained with All-Japan and rose to fame in tag team competition. His legendary feud with Misawa that spanned the '90s produced many of the finest matches in Japan.

All-Japan President and six-time Triple Crown champion Mitsuharu Misawa has announced that he is leaving the promotion. Misawa is gambling that Japanese wrestling fans will take to his new promotion, NOAH.

For years, bad blood persisted between Kawada, ever loyal to All-Japan, and his mentor, Tenryu. That ended when Tenryu walked out during one of New Japan's recent shows. Knowing the desperate position All-Japan was in, Tenryu returned to All-Japan on a recent card and stated that he would help rebuild the promotion.

The fans in attendance were dumbfounded. Motoko Baba stood in the ring fighting back tears, while a choked up Kawada looked on in disbelief. Fans were crying openly, chanting for a reunion of the tag team Kawada and Tenryu had formed years ago, **Revolution**. The two shook hands, and the audience exploded with its approval. All-Japan Pro Wrestling was suddenly alive again.

As for New Japan Pro Wrestling, it remains to be seen how it will react to the decision of Tenryu, who had wrestled consistently for New Japan for more than two years. While New Japan could certainly use the business boost a partnership with All-Japan would provide, front office politics, ego, and tradition will all play roles in deciding what alliance, if any, the companies will share.

Misawa and his NOAH promotion see nothing ahead of them but a world of opportunity. Freed from the oppressive traditions that often stifled All-Japan, Misawa plans to build a more modern wrestling company. Many fear that this means an increased emphasis on "sports entertainment" as opposed to actual wrestling. Misawa, however, offered his assurance to *puroresu* fans that "modern" and "wrestling" can mean something other than "sports entertainment."

Fans of wrestling everywhere will find out exactly what he means very soon.

Soo da, sayonara! □

the MEXICO REPORT

By Janeth LaRuda

Apocalypse nil ... Well, AAA and EMLL met and the world ceased to cave in on itself. With little more than two weeks worth of promotion, the show drew approximately 40,000 fans. Of course, it didn't run as smoothly as some were hoping, as interpromotional rivalries took a decidedly personal turn and altercations broke out between some of the workers.

Due to the fact that these episodes were edited out of the television broadcast and were not reported by any of the major magazines, there has been speculation that these events never happened. But workers from both organizations have confirmed to *PWI* that things did get a bit ugly.

El Hijo de la Película ... While **El Hijo del Santo** has not yet made his expected return to TV, it appears as if Santo is looking to return to the big screen, as he has been in Juarez filming a new movie. No word yet on a title, but more details should be forthcoming soon.

Seeing double? Prior to heading to Japan for TripleMania, AAA President **Antonio Pena** debuted a new wrestler, **Cibernetico**. Name sound familiar? That's because there's already a Cibernetico in AAA—or LLL, to be precise. In order to combat LLL, Pena has begun to introduce a series of "good twins" who will do battle with LLL's evil **Vipers**. It appears **Mosco de la Merced** (original) will be returning to feud with his fake, and there is also word that while waiting for visa issues to clear up—issues that have kept him from returning to ECW—**Super Crazy** could return to feud against the fake **Histeria** (Super Crazy was the original Histeria).

Alushe lives ... When last we left the furry little monster, **Alushe** had been kidnapped by the evil **Pierroth Jr.** But after Pierroth released Alushe at Arena Mexico, rather than return to **Tinieblas**, he ran back into the arms of Pierroth. Apparently, though, Pierroth and Alushe grew tired of each other shortly after that shocking development, as Alushe has since returned to his role as the faithful sidekick of Tinieblas.

La Fiera has announced his retirement ... While **La Fiera** may not be well-known to American fans, one of his moves is. It was Fiera who invented the frog splash, and during his time in Mexico, **Eddie Guerrero** picked up the move and taught it to his **Los Gringos Locos** tag team partner, **Art Barr. 2 Cold Scorpio** is responsible for the name, as he was the one who told Eddie he looked like a frog while executing the maneuver.

While trying to work out visa problems that have kept him in Mexico, former ECW TV champion Super Crazy is expected to return to AAA and feud with LLL's Histeria.

Lizmark Jr. has returned ... To EMLL, that is. It seems that many of the WCW Luchadores are making their returns to Arena Mexico, as **Lizmark Jr.** has been teaming with **Villano IV** and **V** on recent shows.

Mr. Niebla and Emilio Charles Jr. win part one of EMLL's tag tournament ... The tournament consisted of two eight-team single-round single-elimination tournaments held on consecutive weeks. Part two of the tournament saw **Rey Bucanero** and **Ultimo Guerrero** defeat the father and son team of Lizmark Jr. and **Lizmark Sr.** Check back here next month to find out who won the tourney.

Tijuana Lucha ... Just weeks after making a *rudo* turn to become part of the **First Family**, **Psicosis** (**Nicho el Millonario**) turned against Family members **Rey Misterio Sr.**, **Damian**, and **Halloween**. Earlier in the evening, Psicosis had joined his brother **Fobia** in the ring to declare solidarity among the *rudos*. So it came as little surprise when Fobia came to the ring following Psicosis' turn and proceeded to attack his little brother. With Tijuana now overrun with *rudos*, can it be long before **Konnan** and **Rey Misterio Jr.** make their return to aid Psicosis in his battles?

Lucha in the U.S. ... As predicted last month, **Lady Victoria** made her XPW debut working as Halloween and Damian's valet ... Following his release from WCW, Psicosis (Nicho el Millonario) has returned to ECW ... Despite numerous online rumors, **La Parka** is still under contract to WCW, even if he does spend most of his time working Mexico's Monterrey territory.

Back next month with more from the land of Lucha. □

PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED®

TOP 10

1 THE ROCK
272, Miami, FL
(8) WWF World champion

2 JUSTIN CREDIBLE
227, Waterbury, CT
(5) ECW World champion

3 CHRIS BENOIT
218, Edmonton, Alberta
(7) No. 2 contender: WWF World title

4 JEFF JARRETT
230, Nashville, TN
(1) No. 1 contender: WCW World title

5 KENSUKE SASAKI
251, Tokyo, Japan
(4) IWGP heavyweight champion

6 BOOKER T
250, Houston, TX
(–) WCW World champion

7 KURT ANGLE
233, Pittsburgh, PA
(–) No. 3 contender: WWF World title

8 ROB VAN DAM
237, Battle Creek, MI
(–) No. 2 contender: ECW World title

9 TRIPLE-H
284, Greenwich, CT
(3) No. 4 contender: WWF World title

10 CHRIS JERICHO
225, Winnipeg, Manitoba
(–) No. 5 contender: WWF World title

Booker T

TAG TEAMS

1 CHRISTIAN & EDGE
Combined weight: 465 pounds
(9) WWF World tag team champions

2 KRONIC
Combined weight: 622 pounds
(3) WCW World tag team champions

3 YUJI NAGATA & MANABU NAKANISHI
Combined weight: 455 pounds
(1) IWGP International tag team champions

4 TEST & ALBERT
Combined weight: 642 pounds
(4) No. 1 contenders: WWF World tag title

5 CHUCK PALUMBO & SHAWN STASIAK
Combined weight: 516 pounds
(5) No. 1 contenders: WCW World tag title

6 JEFF & MATT HARDY
Combined weight: 422 pounds
(–) No. 2 contenders: WWF World tag title

7 ANGEL & DEVITO
Combined weight: 507 pounds
(–) No. 1 contenders: ECW World tag title

8 BUH BUH RAY & D-VON DUDLEY
Combined weight: 585 pounds
(6) No. 3 contenders: WWF World tag title

9 DANNY DORING & ROADKILL
Combined weight: 533 pounds
(–) No. 2 contenders: ECW World tag title

10 BRADSHAW & FAAROOQ
Combined weight: 599 pounds
(–) No. 4 contenders: WWF World tag title

WCW

World Champion:
BOOKER T
(8) 250, Houston, TX

1—JEFF JARRETT
(C) 230, Nashville, TN
2—BILL GOLDBERG
(9) 283, Tulsa, OK
3—SCOTT STEINER
(1) 275, Detroit, MI
4—VAMPIRO
(4) 220, Thunder Bay, Ontario
5—SHANE DOUGLAS
(–) 255, Pittsburgh, PA
6—KEVIN NASH
(2) 356, Detroit, MI
7—LT. LOCO
(7) 210, El Paso, TX
8—BIG VITO
(–) 265, Staten Island, NY
9—MIKE AWESOME
(5) 285, Tampa, FL
10—KANYON
(–) 245, Queens, NY

WWF

World Champion:
THE ROCK
(3) 272, Miami, FL

1—VAL VENIS
(–) 250, Oakville, Ontario
2—CHRIS BENOIT
(2) 218, Edmonton, Alberta
3—KURT ANGLE
(–) 233, Pittsburgh, PA
4—TRIPLE-H
(C) 284, Greenwich, CT
5—CHRIS JERICHO
(6) 225, Winnipeg, Manitoba
6—THE UNDERTAKER
(8) 328, Death Valley, CA
7—RIKISHI PHATU
(1) 421, San Francisco, CA
8—KANE
(5) 345, parts unknown
9—EDDIE GUERRERO
(4) 221, El Paso, TX
10—THE GODFATHER
(–) 340, Las Vegas, NV

ECW

World Champion:
JUSTIN CREDIBLE
(C) 227, Waterbury, CT

1—RHINO
(1) 285, Detroit, MI
2—ROB VAN DAM
(6) 237, Battle Creek, MI
3—JERRY LYNN
(2) 224, Minneapolis, MN
4—THE SANDMAN
(3) 244, Philadelphia, PA
5—KID KASH
(8) 230, Johnson City, TN
6—TOMMY DREAMER
(5) 265, Yonkers, NY
7—YOSHIHIRO TAJIRI
(10) 224, Tokyo, Japan
8—MIKEY WHIPWRECK
(–) 204, New York, NY
9—SCOTTY ANTON
(4) 235, Atlanta, GA
10—LITTLE GUIDO
(7) 201, Howard Beach, NY

NWA

NWA Champion:
TITLE VACANT

1—KEVIN NORTHCUTT
(2) 348, Chalmette, LA
2—KURRGAN
(1) 345, Hamilton, Ontario
3—STONE MOUNTAIN
(7) 350, Stone Mountain, GA
4—TRACEY SMOTHERS
(6) 227, Atlanta, GA
5—EQUALIZER
(4) 275, Atlantic Highlands, NJ
6—ROBBY ROYCE
(5) 205, Toronto, Ontario
7—GARY STEELE
(3) 241, London, England
8—AIR PARIS
(10) 190, Summerville, GA
9—COLORADO KID
(–) 231, Colorado Springs, CO
10—BLADE BOUDREAUX
(–) 230, New Orleans, LA

OFFICIAL RATINGS

Top 10 and Tag Team ratings are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and inherent skill of each wrestler or team. These ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board. All other ratings are based on the official current positions of challengers to the top title in each category; certain titleholders receive an automatic spot in the ratings. The number in parentheses indicates a wrestler's position in that category last issue; (-) indicates that the wrestler was not rated in that category last issue. while (C) indicates the wrestler was champion in that category last issue.

For period ended July 12, 2000

AMERICAN INDEPENDENT WRESTLING FEDERATION: Champion—Rick Deezel; 1—Creeping Death; 2—The Scorpion; 3—Gemini; 4—Steve Niles; 5—Neal Leathers; 6—Sebastian Kane; 7—Major Havoc; 8—Jackie Anderson; 9—Don Carson; 10—Terry Mullagan.

EAST COAST WRESTLING ASSOCIATION: Champion—J.J. The Ring Crew Guy; 1—Glen Osbourne; 2—Cheetah Master; 3—B.W. Brown; 4—Mr. Ooh La La; 5—Charlie Haas; 6—Vince Goodnite; 7—Russ Haas; 8—Ty Street; 9—Trent Acid; 10—Mozart Fontaine.

FUTURE WRESTLING ALLIANCE: Champion—Mike Quackenbush; 1—Jake Daniels; 2—Don Montoya; 3—Lo-Ki; 4—Monsta Mack; 5—High Voltage; 6—Mafia; 7—Ronnie Zukko; 8—Mark Shrader; 9—Reckless Youth; 10—Dino Devine.

GLOBAL PRO WRESTLING: Champion—Title Vacant; 1—James Grizzly; 2—Treach Phillips Jr.; 3—Tim Storm; 4—Dexter Hardaway; 5—Tojo Jr.; 6—Scott Storm; 7—Shawn Storm; 8—T.S. Aggressor; 9—Tim War Cloud; 10—Soultaker.

MARYLAND CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: Champion—Bruiser; 1—Tom Brandi; 2—Romeo Valentino; 3—Julio Fantastico; 4—Gillberg; 5—Qeenan Creed; 6—Jimmy Cicero; 7—Corporal Punishment; 8—Dino Devine; 9—Ronnie Zukko; 10—Christian York.

OKLAHOMA PRO WRESTLING: Champion—Bull Schmitt; 1—Renegade; 2—Splash Jackson; 3—Rocco Valentino; 4—Ichiban; 5—Big Daddy Moore; 6—Chief Red Eagle; 7—Joey Cassanova; 8—Bolo; 9—AWOL; 10—Pete Maguire.

NWA MID-SOUTH: Champion—Tracey Smothers; 1—Blade Boudreaux; 2—The Aristocrat; 3—Kip Morris; 4—King Cobra; 5—Joey Venture; 6—Mark Southern; 7—Chris Michaels; 8—Kaos; 9—Kilo; 10—Jimmy Valiant.

RHODE ISLAND WRESTLING ALLIANCE: Champion—Wolverine; 1—Danger Boy Alfredo; 2—Danny Cama; 3—Pierre the Mountie; 4—Dave Padula; 5—Thrash; 6—The Intern; 7—Max Brannigan; 8—Captain Maniac Cop; 9—Mael; 10—Danny Boy O'Callahan.

SOUTHERN CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: Champion—Scab; 1—Kross; 2—Cham Pain; 3—Uncle Tom Kettle; 4—Major DeBeers; 5—Rick Link; 6—Boris Dragoff; 7—Tears; 8—Juice; 9—Stratus; 10—Aldo DeGama.

TEXAS CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: Champion—Beast; 1—Nature Boy Blair; 2—Chris Chronic; 3—Cyclone; 4—Hell Kid; 5—Tommy Nero; 6—Jeremy Young; 7—Blake Wiggins; 8—Sledge Johnson; 9—Brangus; 10—Coach.

THUNDER WRESTLING FEDERATION: Champion—J.T. Storm; 1—Florida Hurricane; 2—Dagon Briggs; 3—Ashe Corvan; 4—Johnnie Lee; 5—O'Callaghan; 6—Big Nasty; 7—Dr. Feelgood; 8—Bull Matthews; 9—Shaun Brehtt; 10—Wade Daniels.

UNIFIED CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: Champion—Al Savage; 1—Steve Southern; 2—Joe Kane; 3—Tony Sweatt; 4—Chad Cheetum; 5—Big Nasty; 6—Mr. Wrestling III; 7—Aiky Breaky Kid; 8—Frank Smith; 9—Tommy Martinelli; 10—Bob Armstrong.

NEW JAPAN

IWGP Champion:
KENSUKE SASAKI
(C) 251, Tokyo, Japan

1—TATSUHITO TAKAIWA
(1) 227, Tokyo, Japan
2—JUSHIN LIGER
(6) 222, Hiroshima, Japan
3—MASA CHONO
(3) 235, Tokyo, Japan
4—HIROYOSHI TENZAN
(7) 270, Tokyo, Japan
5—SATOSHI KOJIMA
(8) 223, Tokyo, Japan
6—YUJI NAGATA
(4) 228, Tokyo, Japan
7—KOJI KANEMOTO
(9) 205, Osaka, Japan
8—KENDO KA SHIN
(-) 195, Tokyo, Japan
9—MANABU NAKANISHI
(2) 235, Tokyo, Japan
10—SHINJIRO OTANI
(-) 215, Yokohama, Japan

ALL-JAPAN

Triple Crown Champion:
TITLES VACANT

1—TOSHIAKI KAWADA
(2) 245, Ashikaga, Japan
2—MASA FUCHI
(-) 225, Tokyo, Japan
3—JOHNNY SMITH
(-) 235, Manchester, England
4—2 COLD SCORPIO
(-) 222, Denver, CO
5—STEVE WILLIAMS
(8) 265, Norman, OK
6—MAUNUKEA MOSSMAN
(10) 235, Honolulu, HI
7—GENICHIRO TENRYU
(-) 235, Tokyo, Japan
8—WOLF HAWKFIELD
(-) 272, New Port Richey, FL
9—STAN HANSEN
(5) 322, Borger, TX
10—MIKE BARTON
(-) 263, Austin, TX

EMLL

EMLL Champion:
UNIVERSO DOS MIL
(C) 240, Mexico City, Mexico

1—MR. NIEBLA
(-) 185, Cualtitlan, Mexico
2—EMILIO CHARLES JR.
(5) 222, Mexico City, Mexico
3—RAYO DE JALISCO JR.
(1) 270, Guadalajara, Mexico
4—SCORPIO JR.
(6) 195, Nezahaulcoyoti, Mexico
5—FUERZA GUERRERA
(-) 175, Mexico City, Mexico
6—BLUE PANTHER
(3) 215, Mexico City, Mexico
7—TARZAN BOY
(-) 218, Mexico City, Mexico
8—ULTIMO GUERRERO
(-) 173, Mexico City, Mexico
9—CIEN CARAS
(-) 240, Lagos de Moreno, Mexico
10—MASCARA ANOS DOS MIL
(7) 228, Mexico City, Mexico

AAA

AAA Champion:
LATIN LOVER
(C) 190, Monterrey, Mexico

1—HEAVY METAL
(3) 180, Mexico City, Mexico
2—OCTAGON
(9) 180, Monterrey, Mexico
3—CIBERNETICO
(2) 235, Mexico City, Mexico
4—PERRO AGUAYO JR.
(1) 165, Zacatecas, Mexico
5—ABISMO NEGRO
(7) 210, Pachua, Mexico
6—HECTOR GARZA
(4) 220, Monterrey, Mexico
7—BLUE DEMON JR.
(6) 180, Toluca, Mexico
8—EL TEXANO
(10) 225, Mexico City, Mexico
9—PIRATA MORGAN
(-) 221, Mexico City, Mexico
10—EL CANEK
(8) 235, Mexico City, Mexico

RATINGS ANALYSIS

Every month, this column will tell fans how we go about rating over 200 wrestlers in 22 different categories. It is a behind-the-scenes look at the most important–and respected–ratings system in the sport. This column is vital reading for all wrestling fans.

Hogan's last stand? You might have noticed that we opted not to rank **Hulk Hogan** this month. In fact, don't be surprised if you never see his name high up in the WCW rankings again. We weren't exactly sure what to make of what happened at Bash at the Beach. What has been made clear is that Hogan and **Vince Russo** have no desire to work together any longer.

Hulk Hogan

It's not like Russo is alone in his thinking about Hogan. A lot of people have been waiting for Hogan to retire for years and feel WCW would be a lot better off if younger, fresher stars were given a chance at main-eventing. If a major promotion does make the decision to push younger stars over big name veterans, it has to accept the fact that it might take a while for fans to accept those wrestlers as top stars, and thus business might not be all that great for a while.

The WWF struggled in a big way in the mid-1990s after losing a lot of big name stars to WCW, but it eventually established new stars (namely **Triple-H**, **The Rock**, and **Kurt Angle**), added a few others who were never given the chance to become *huge* stars elsewhere, and discovered it had the deepest and strongest roster of wrestling talent in the world.

Do the people who run WCW really have the patience to take such a drastic approach? Probably not, given that the company is already losing millions upon millions upon millions of dollars.

Getting back to Hogan, though, we do suspect that he'll try to prove he has at least one more run at the top left in him. We'll find out soon if he'll do that in WCW or somewhere else.

Room at the top. There were a few rumors floating around this summer about some WWF wrestlers being upset that the main event matches were being dominated by the likes of Triple-H, The Rock, and **The Undertaker**, and that others weren't being given enough opportunities to elevate themselves to that elite level.

If those rumors were true, it now looks like there wasn't much reason for concern. Just check out our Top 10 for this month. No fewer than *five* WWF superstars are on that list—and that *doesn't* include the Intercontinental champ at press time, **Val Venis**. You have World champ The Rock, his arch-rival, Triple-H, as well as **Chris Benoit**, Kurt Angle, and **Chris Jericho**. So much for the main events needing to be freshened up.

Chris Jericho

Think of all the potential WWF World title matches you could see in the next few months. The Rock can't stand Triple-H, Angle, or Benoit, and he has never enjoyed a great relationship with Y2J, so he'd gladly slug it out with any of those four. Triple-H despises The Rock and Jericho equally and trusts Angle less and less each day. Angle and Jericho have had problems with all four men as well, and Benoit hates just about everyone except **Shane McMahon** these days.

Keeping in mind that neither **Kane** nor The Undertaker earned a spot in the Top 10 this month, even though both are certainly in the World title picture, it's not going to be easy for *any* man to hold that WWF championship for long.

When you first glance at our Top 10, you might think the opposite is true in the case of WCW. Only two men from that company—former World champ **Jeff Jarrett** and current champ **Booker T**—made it, but with Hogan, **Ric Flair**, **Sting**, **Dallas Page**, **Scott Hall**, **Kevin Nash**, and **Lex Luger** all either out or playing a reduced role, others are getting and will continue to get chances to elevate themselves. Did you think Booker would win the World title by the end of 2000? Probably not.

In addition to **Bill Goldberg**, men like **Chris Kanyon**, **Vampiro**, and **Scott Steiner** have all established themselves as legitimate World title contenders in WCW. In time, perhaps **Shane Douglas**, **Billy Kidman**, **Mike Awesome**, and a few others will do the same.

That's all we have! If you have any questions or comments regarding our ratings or what you see on this page, we want to hear from you. Write to: "Ratings Analysis," c/o PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED, Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034. □

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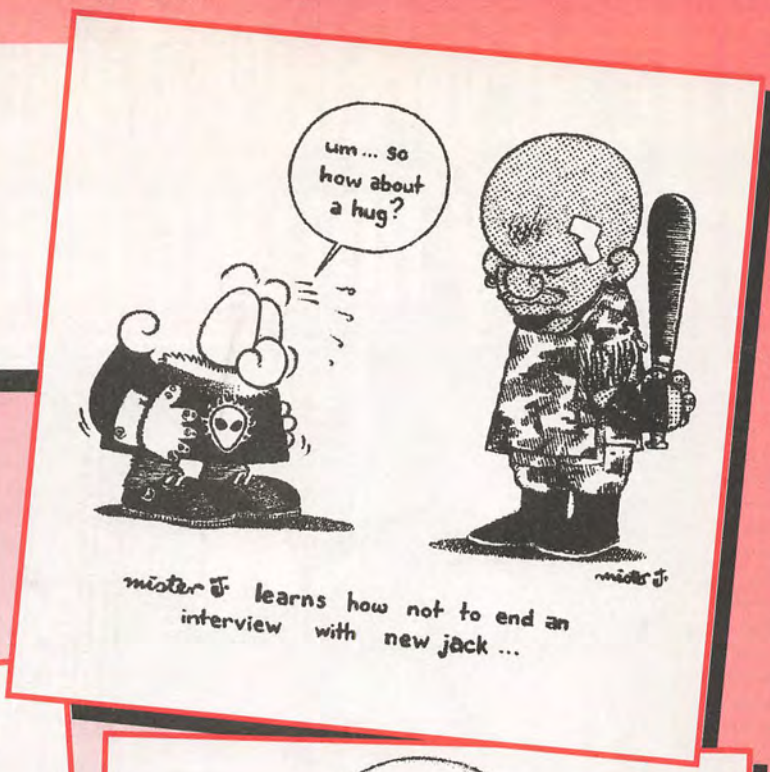
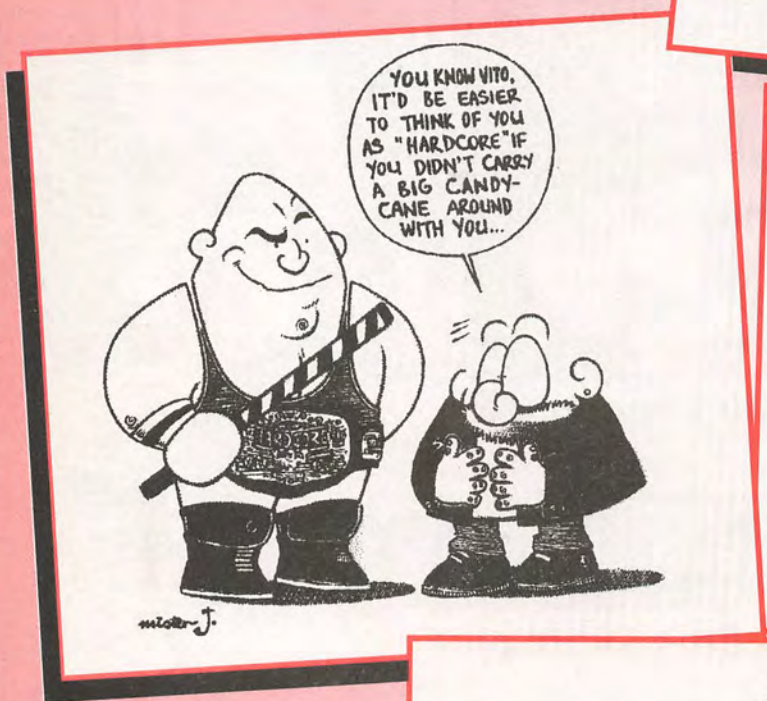
By Jason Conlan





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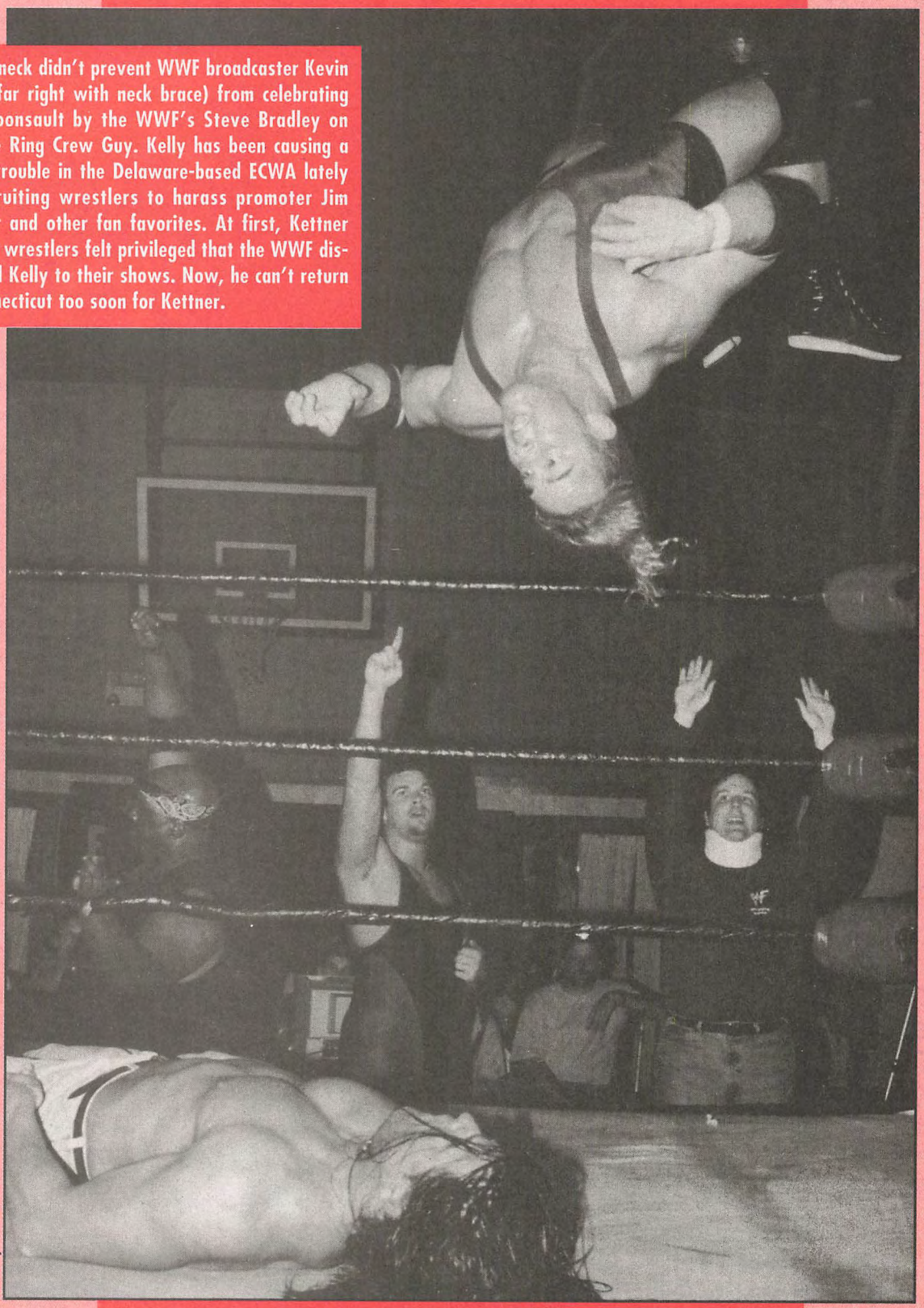
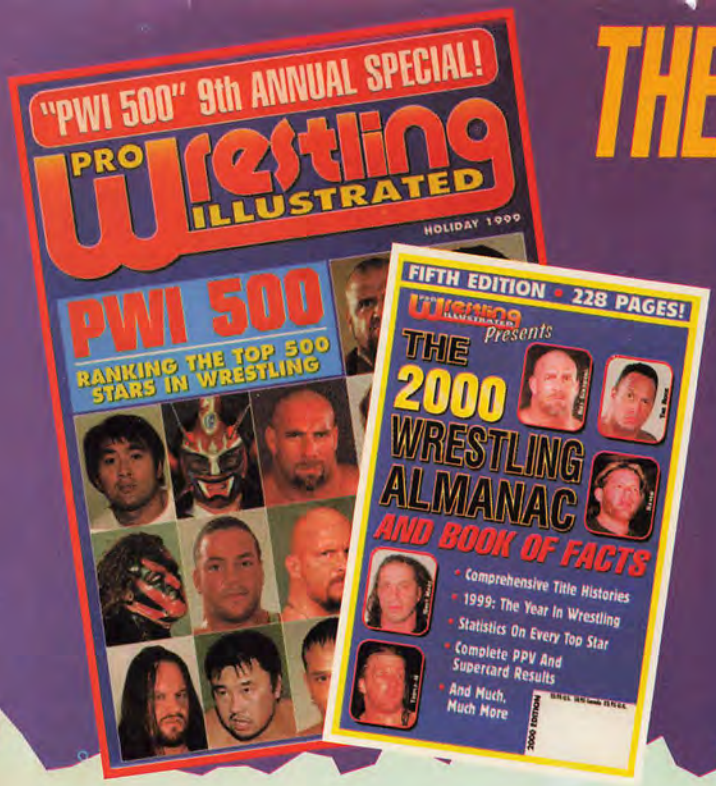


A stiff neck didn't prevent WWF broadcaster Kevin Kelly (far right with neck brace) from celebrating this moonsault by the WWF's Steve Bradley on J.J. the Ring Crew Guy. Kelly has been causing a lot of trouble in the Delaware-based ECWA lately by recruiting wrestlers to harass promoter Jim Kettner and other fan favorites. At first, Kettner and his wrestlers felt privileged that the WWF dispatched Kelly to their shows. Now, he can't return to Connecticut too soon for Kettner.

Photo by Joe Zanolle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